



Men's Health

BELLY OFF

2014

GUIDE

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KILOS!**
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20 Minutes
a Day

BURN FAT 24/7!

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THE BETTER SEX WORKOUT

50 POWERFOODS!

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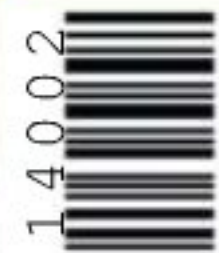
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Men's Health

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"The best thing is I can now recover faster so I'm ready to train again sooner."

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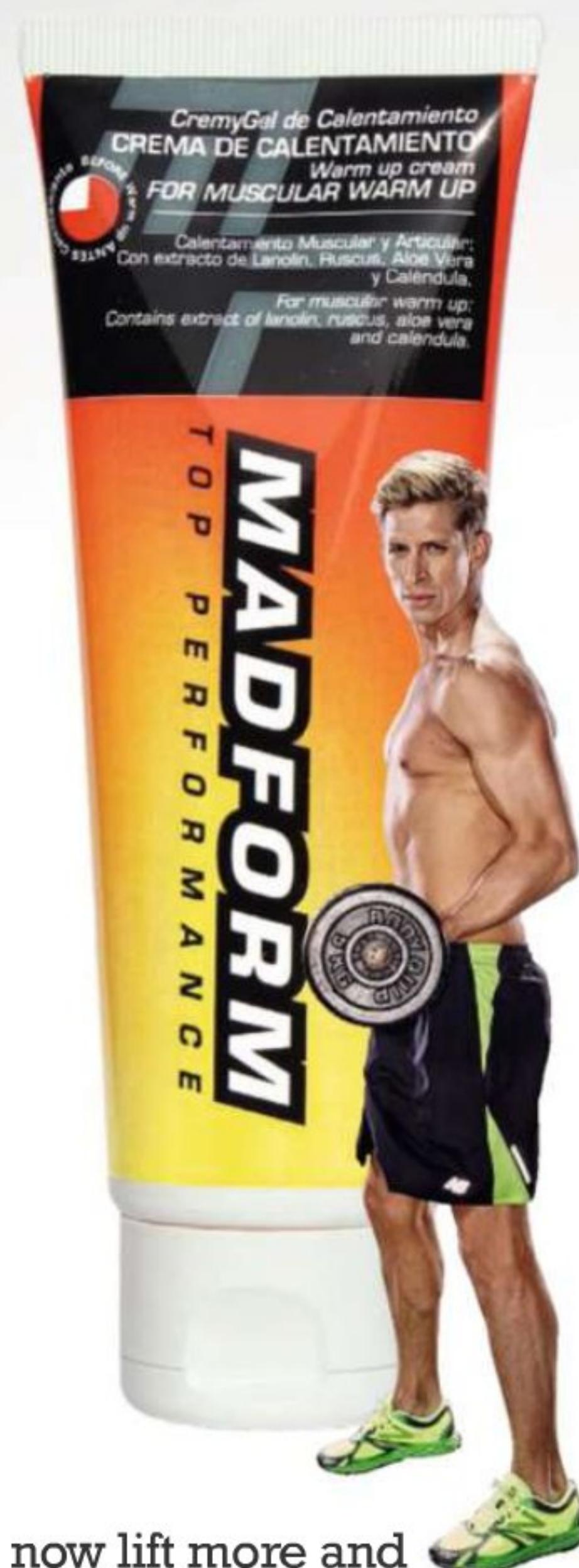
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will show you how to
lose the spare tyre, p52

CJ LIEBENBERG

**LOST
17KG!**

see page 60

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

You'll want to remember this moment.

Even if you didn't realise it, the instant you picked up this guide, you set in motion a plan that's going to change your life – the decision to finally abandon all excuses and set yourself on the path to lasting fitness.

That's because this *Men's Health* Belly Off! Guide contains all the cutting-edge training, nutrition and weight loss information you need to completely transform your body and keep you fit, healthy and happy – for life.

This book is for everyone: if you've never worked out before, are coming back after a break, or are looking to amp up your current routine. We'll help you, whatever your goal. Maybe you want to undo the damage of a winter of inactivity, step onto the beach with confidence, play your sport with new vigour or attract that elusive office beauty.

Start with Phase One: Reclaim Your Body. The Get-Back-In-Shape Workout (page 20) will have you seeing total-body results in no time by concentrating on three key areas of fitness: flexibility, strength and cardiovascular capacity. Even better, it uses minimal equipment, so you can do your workout anywhere, anytime.

Short on time? Look no further than the quick but effective workouts in "Big Muscles in 15 Minutes," on page 80.

As you progress through Phase Two: Maintain Your Gains and into Phase Three: Train Like An Athlete, you'll read advice and inspiration from men who are at the top of their game – fitness and nutrition experts, as well as regular guys who fought the battle of the bulge... and won.

Check out:

- > "Make Your Workout Work For You", page 74: Expert answers to perplexing questions.
- > "You Lose, You Win", page 52: The real-life success stories of guys just like you.
- > "The All-Star Diet", page 106: An eating plan so you can work harder, train longer and look better.

And if you need more convincing that this guide will change your life, you'll want to try "The Better Sex Workout", on page 114.

But don't take our word for it. Turn the page and see for yourself!

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Reclaim Your Body

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BONUS!

Reprogramme Your Metabolism

OUR MODERN WORLD CONSPIRES TO MAKE US FAT AND KEEP US FAT.
HERE ARE THE WEAPONS THAT CAN HELP YOU FIGHT BACK

BY LOU SCHULER

W

hen I was a boy, my father was the fattest person I knew. He was 1.8m and about 115 kilograms, which would've made him the size of a Currie Cup forward of that era – the early 1960s. If anything, he was proud of his girth. He boasted, “the army taught me how to eat,” and he spent the rest of his life acting on that knowledge. Still, it took real effort for a guy to inflate the way my father did. My mother believed he worked harder at eating than he did at his job. Back then, the average man in his thirties weighed 77kg, so people noticed someone my dad's size. Even in 1980, after we'd joined the same gym, I can remember a conversation with a trainer who said “that guy Gary” was the fattest person he'd seen on the treadmill. I was one of the skinnier guys, so he didn't realise he

had just described my father. Today you wouldn't notice a man of my father's weight or girth – not when a typical guy in his thirties now weighs 89kg. You probably know a few people who would make my dad look svelte. Maybe you're one of them. A lot of us know from sorry experience that the classic weight-reduction formula – exercise more, eat less



– works in the short term, but the fat typically comes back. Sometimes a double chin redoubles, just to show you who's in charge. Human metabolism is a complex system that evolved to keep our weight stable in times of both abundance and famine. How did it devolve into a coin toss where the choices are “heads, you gain weight” and “tails, you gain even more”?

For many, the problem is a condition called metabolic inflexibility, a bit of complicated science that points the way towards simple diet, exercise and lifestyle modifications – modifications that can help you become lean and stay lean. But before we dive into the deep end of weight loss research, let's take a quick detour and look at the reasons the single-generation rise in obesity shouldn't have happened. We'll then see how it did happen and finally we'll reach the important part: how you can seize your own metabolic destiny and steer it towards skinny.

WHY WE CAN'T EAT JUST ONE ANY MORE

From the early 1900s – when obesity was so uncommon that people lined up to gawk at the “fat lady” in circus sideshows – until the 1980s, our per capita food supply stayed more or less the same. We could've eaten more food back then. We just didn't crave it as we do now. Consider everything that happens when you eat a normal meal.

- ➔ *The food you eat becomes progressively less appetising. No matter how good the first few bites of that steak might be, by the end you're just going through the motions.*
- ➔ *Your stomach expands, sending chemical messages to your brain, asking it to stop eating.*
- ➔ *Your metabolism cranks up as your body works to move the food through your digestive system, burning off 10% of the kilojoules you just ate.*
- ➔ *Over the following hours and even days, your body monitors your energy equals balance – the amount of kilojoules coming in and going out. Eat more than you need and you'll compensate with a faster metabolism – or by burning more kilojoules through physical activity, or by producing more hormones like leptin, which lowers your appetite.*


These mechanisms also work in reverse. If you eat less than you need to maintain your current weight, your metabolism slows to preserve energy and hunger hormones like ghrelin tick up to increase your appetite.

The goal of this complex system is to hit a balance, at which point it's hard to gain or lose weight. Only powerful stimuli can override this system, to literally alter your metabolism so it can't respond in the way it should. Enter your main adversary: the modern food industry, which is to nutrition what striking is to the economy – a sure way to twist a good system into one that runs counter to everybody's best interests.

When Lay's potato chips introduced the famous slogan “Bet you can't eat just one” in the early 1960s, they knew what they were talking about. Their food scientists were in the process of snipping the brake lines on our appetites and we began running stop signs that had existed for centuries. The food scientists found ways to combine sugar, salt and fat so that “enough” was never actually enough. If we have a little, we want a lot. Our metabolism wasn't prepared to counteract the hedonic reward of these new foods or the quantities available. The food manufacturers ramped up food energy production to 16 000 daily kilojoules per person, enough to put most at the “who shrunk my seat belt?” end of the body-weight range.

“Food stimulates many parts of the brain, including regions associated with reward,” says Dr Stephan Guyenet, a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Washington. “By stimulating those reward pathways directly, you can have a profound impact on food preference and body fat. Manufacturers are trying to maximise the reward.” The upshot, he says: “We're awash in food that's easily available, energy dense, highly palatable and highly rewarding. Commercial food overstimulates those connections in the brain.”

IS
YOUR FAT
BURNER
STUCK
ON LOW?



Food scientists combine sugar, salt and fat so that “enough” is never actually enough

SO NOW GLUCOSE IS GETTING US DOWN, TOO.

As we eat massive volumes of over-stimulating food – the whole bag of chips, washed down with a litre of cooldrink – our digestive processes convert it all into massive amounts of blood sugar. That’s where the hormone insulin comes in. It’s a kind of bodily butler in charge of showing glucose to safe havens in the body. In our society, and in our bodies, it’s one overworked butler.

“Your body is hardwired to survive,” says Dr Mike Nelson from the University of Minnesota who has studied this problem for the past six years. “If your glucose is too high,

it’s toxic. Your body will do everything possible to get it out of there.” The hormone insulin is your main glucose-disposal tool. The longer it stays elevated, the less effective it becomes; and the less effective it becomes, the longer it stays elevated. Insulin’s purpose is to eliminate glucose in the blood by storing it in the body. As a consequence, insulin inhibits our ability to burn fat. Chronically elevated insulin means your body is always using less fat for energy than it otherwise would, so fat gathers where you want it least.

Human bodies are designed to run on a mix of fuels, using fat predominantly at rest or during low-intensity exercise. You gradually shift to a higher dependence on carbohydrates as exercise becomes more difficult. If you’re metabolically flexible, you can shift easily from one fuel source to the other, tapping into your body’s abundant fat deposits while saving those limited carbohydrates for when they’re really needed. Someone with chronically elevated insulin becomes inflexible, burning too many carbs all the time and leaving fat stores untouched. That’s a metabolic disaster for a body that has more fat than it could ever use – a body that, under normal circumstances, should be tapping fat like a pool of black gold under the tundra. “Systems are trying as hard as they can to cooperate with each other,” Nelson says. “But they can’t.”

THE SURE WAY TO FIND OUT IS TO MEASURE YOUR RESPIRATORY QUOTIENT, or RQ – the ratio of carbon dioxide exhaled to oxygen inhaled. That predicts how much fat or carbohydrate you burn at rest or during exercise. Leaner people typically have lower RQs; fatter people almost always have higher RQs. You can schedule an RQ test, but a basic blood test also provides clues. If your fasting blood sugar is unusually high – 100 to 125mg per decilitre of blood – you almost certainly have a problem with insulin. Another sign is a high ratio of triglycerides to HDL cholesterol. One way insulin eliminates excess glucose is by starting a process to transform it into triglycerides. Most of these triglycerides end up in fat cells, but your circulating levels still remain high. A parallel effect is low levels of HDL, the “good” cholesterol. The danger zone is a 3.5:1 ratio of triglycerides to HDL, but regardless of the ratio, you should worry about a triglyceride count higher than 150mg per decilitre (mg/dL) or an HDL below 40 mg/dL. Where you carry the fat also matters. “Belly fat correlates pretty well with insulin resistance,” says Dr Stephan Guyenet. If you can rest your hands on your belly while standing, it’s too big.

WHY MOST MEN CAN'T JOG THEIR WAY TO THE PROMISED LAND

We all grow hungry when our carbohydrate supplies run down. This is one of our most important survival mechanisms, due to the fact that our brains normally run on pure glucose. We can make glucose from fat, but that's not the easiest way to get it. Our bodies prefer the real thing. So we become ravenously hungry when our glucose supplies suddenly drop. The problem for the metabolically inflexible man is that his supplies are always running low, and his body is always looking for the next food fix. A workout can exacerbate the problem by draining more carbs than the body wants to give up.

So the standard reaction to too much belly – “I have to start jogging” – could actually hurt in two ways. A man who's using the wrong fuel won't get much out of it because of his limited endurance. He could also end up hungrier afterwards, as his body panics over depleted glycogen stores.

“You can't burn excess fat without mobilising it from a fat cell,” says Dr Mike Ormsbee, a professor of exercise physiology and sports nutrition at Florida State University. “You have to move it from the fat cells to the blood, so you can eventually use it for energy elsewhere.”



FLEX PLAN

THIS WORKOUT, BASED ON RESEARCH FROM FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY, OPTIMISES THE WAY YOUR BODY USES FUEL AND BURNS FAT.
THE GOAL: MORE MUSCULAR FITNESS AND BETTER GLUCOSE STORAGE

Do three sets of each exercise, alternating between the A and B exercise of each pair until you've finished all sets of both exercises. Then move on to the next pair. Choose weights or exercise variations you can do 10 times. Do eight reps for the first two sets, and then do as many reps as you can for the third set. Catch your breath after each set, but stay on your feet for the entire workout.

1A: Goblet squat with a bench

Grab a heavy dumbbell or kettlebell and hold it against your chest with both hands. Stand with your back to a bench or a step that's about 45cm high. Push your hips back and lower your butt to the bench. Touch it lightly and then return to standing.

1B: Standing lat pull-down

Attach a long bar to the high pulley of a cable machine. Grab it with your hands a bit beyond shoulder-width apart and step back as you face the cable machine, keeping your arms straight and some tension in the cable. This is the starting position. Pull the bar to your lower chest and then return it to the starting position.

2A: Straight-leg dead lift

Grab a barbell overhand, your hands just outside your legs, and hold it at arm's length in front of your thighs. Lower the bar until it's just below your knees and then pull your shoulders back to return to standing.

2B: Push-up

Choose a push-up variation that's challenging for 10 reps. Do a conventional push-up, elevate both feet on a bench or elevate one foot on a bench and keep the other one raised. If you're advanced, you might put your hands on a stability ball or on a pair of medicine balls. Keep your body in a straight line from neck to ankles as you lower your chest, and push back up to the starting position.

3A: Reverse lunge and shoulder press

Stand holding a pair of dumbbells at your shoulders. Step back with one leg and lower your body until the top of your front thigh is parallel to the floor and your rear knee comes close to the floor. At the same time, press the dumbbells overhead. Push back to standing as you lower the dumbbells to your shoulders. Repeat with the other leg. That's one rep.

3B: Standing EZ-bar curl

Grab an EZ-curl bar or a pair of dumbbells. Stand with the weight in front of your thighs. Tighten your upper back and core muscles. Curl the weight towards your shoulders without moving your torso forwards or backwards. Lower the weight and repeat.

Strength training offers a workaround for metabolic inflexibility. “Brief, intense activity seems to dump a lot of fat into the bloodstream,” says Dr Christopher Scott, who studies strength training and metabolism at the University of Southern Maine. “I think it’s to fuel recovery.”

When you do a bout of cardio, the goal is to reach one level of intensity that you can maintain for a long time. And there’s only one recovery period, during which you use much less energy than you did while exercising. But when you’re recovering from a set of bench presses or squats, you burn more kilojoules: “If you do 12 sets, that’s 12 recovery periods,” Scott says. That’s in addition to the long post-workout recovery period, so your body has a lot of time to be burning fat, as opposed to relatively short periods of using carbohydrates for fuel.

Because strength training is an anaerobic activity – meaning your body burns mostly carbohydrate while you lift – you’re burning mostly fat during the recovery period. Moreover, when you leave the weightroom, you’re burning many more kilojoules than you were before the workout – and you’re burning them for hours.

Another argument for strength training – or, really, for any type of exercise in which you alternate hard work with an easier pace – is that you train your body to shift back and forth between fuel sources, making your metabolism more flexible.

WE NOW RETURN TO YOUR REGULATORY SCHEDULED METABOLISM

As important as exercise is – and we’ll deal with that later – it runs a distant second to the first change you need to make.

1 CLEAN UP YOUR DIET

“If you came up with a list of 10 things that affect weight loss, one through seven would involve diet and behaviour,” Scott says. “Then eight, nine and 10 would cover exercise.”

Research shows just about any mainstream diet regimen can work, as long as you stick to it. My guess, based on experience, is that a diet won’t work for you unless it meets two seemingly contradictory standards: it has to be different from what you’re doing now, which is to say it restricts the stuff you currently eat too much of. And it has to be something you can live with for the foreseeable future, meaning it has to be based on foods you like and to which you have easy access.

That’s where behaviour becomes the key to success. “The amount of food you consume is not just the result of

conscious processes,” Guyenet says. Exposing yourself to highly palatable, super-stimulating foods will derail any diet. Nobody has that much willpower.

Three key actions help you build self-control into your diet.

- ➔ *Prepare and eat most of your meals at home, with minimal added salt and minimal added sugar.*
- ➔ *Prepare foods so they’re as close as possible to their natural state: grilled or baked meat, poultry and fish; eggs however you like them; raw or steamed vegetables; fruit; beans, nuts or seeds. (For simple recipes to make real food taste better, check out mh.co.za/food.)*
- ➔ *Fill your lunch or dinner plate with lean protein (chicken breast, sirloin steak, scrambled eggs) and with fibre-rich vegetables. Protein and fibre fill you up fastest and satisfy hunger longest.*
- ➔ *It’s possible to gain weight from a diet of mostly home-cooked food, especially if it includes a lot of high-kilojoule, low-fibre starches like bread, pasta and potatoes. But, like my father, you’d have to work at it.*

2 CUT CARBS AND INCREASE PROTEIN

Since a big belly can be a sign of insulin resistance and insulin resistance manifests functionally as metabolic inflexibility, you will respond best with a lower-carb diet. Even a small decrease in your insulin level will lead to a large increase in fat burning, says Dr Jeff Volek, who studies strength training and nutrition at the University of Connecticut. “Low-carb diets lead to a much greater decrease in fat.”

Low-carb doesn’t have to mean military low-carb. In a year-long weight loss study at Stanford, participants assigned to the Atkins-type diet were eating a third of their kilojoules from carbs by the end – more than twice as much as much as their Atkins-type diet recommended. And they still did better than people assigned to the other diets.

Carbohydrates are less problematic at two times of the day.

- ➔ *First thing in the morning. Wholegrain carbs, like oats, provide an easy-to-access source of glucose for your body and brain.*
- ➔ *Immediately following a workout, when a baked potato can help you to refuel and provides a high level of post-meal satiety.*

3 DON'T EAT ON THURSDAY. EVER

There's one surefire way to encourage your body to burn stored fat: stop feeding it. Intermittent fasting – going without a meal for eight, 12 or even 24 hours at a time – is an increasingly popular weight loss tool.

“Even people who are metabolically inflexible use fat as fuel during a fast,” says Nelson. “It ramps up all the processes associated with burning fat.” Entry-level fasters should start with modest expectations. Some find it easy to skip breakfast and extend an overnight fast to 12 or more hours. But it works only if you have the discipline to end the fast with real food rather than by hitting the drive-thru. For others, an early dinner works best, but this plan is easily derailed if you find yourself wide awake and starving at midnight.

A better strategy: shoot for a daily six-hour break between two substantial meals. Work up to eight hours from time to time. If you feel better – and many fasters say they do – build up to a single 24-hour fast once a week. If you feel worse (I know I do), stick with a meal/snack schedule built around foods you prepare yourself.

4 NEVER GO JOGGING

“I don't think low-intensity, steady-state exercise is a very effective stand-alone treatment for existing obesity,” Guyenet says. Interval exercise – short periods of hard work followed by longer periods of recovery – pushes your body to shift quickly from carbs to fat and back again while boosting your metabolism for hours afterwards.

Here are three ways to light a fire:

- ➔ *Time-specific intervals. You might run hard for 20 seconds and then recover for 40 seconds. An advanced athlete might use a one-to-one work-to-rest ratio, so he'd go hard for 30 seconds and recover for 30 seconds. You can also do this with weights or calisthenics. Ten minutes of these intervals – at the beginning or end of a regular workout or as a stand-alone training session – is plenty to start. Fifteen to 20 minutes is the max for anyone.*
- ➔ *Volume-specific intervals. Go for a fixed number of repetitions if you're lifting (which is how most of us work out), or a specific distance if you're running or swimming and then recover for however long it takes. You can train like this for a full workout – 30 to 45 minutes of lifting or cardiovascular exercise, plus five to 10 minutes of warm-ups.*

- ➔ *Timed volume-specific intervals. You might do 10 push-ups or squats or kettlebell swings every minute. The faster you do the reps, the more time you have to recover. But with subsequent sets, your pace will slow down, which cuts into your recovery time and leaves you with more residual fatigue. That's what you want, since fatigue is what keeps your metabolism elevated long after you leave the gym.*

5 PUSH BEYOND YOUR COMFORT ZONE

“We want the quick fix and we want it to be easy,” Scott says. “But what do all successful programmes have in common? You're working your butt off. Intense activity, by itself, is going to produce changes.” That doesn't mean kill yourself every time you pick up a dumbbell. But it does mean pushing your body to do more than it currently does.

“Do more” can mean any of the following:

- ➔ *Higher volume – more sets, reps or kilometres.*
- ➔ *Higher intensity – heavier weights, faster rides or runs.*
- ➔ *Higher frequency – the same thing more often.*
- ➔ *Higher difficulty – more challenging lifts or incorporating hills into cardio training.*

From time to time, it helps to ask yourself if what you're doing is “hard” or if you're doing something now that you wouldn't or couldn't do last month or last year. If the answer is no, you probably need to turn it up a notch (or two).

6 DON'T EXPECT PERFECTION

“Ninety percent compliance is good enough,” Nelson says. “The closer you are to 100% compliance, the less you benefit from it. An occasional ice cream or a packet of chips, a slice of pizza shouldn't destroy you.”

There's one hard-and-fast rule for indulgence, Nelson adds: “Sit back and enjoy it!” Don't feel guilty, don't try to run a marathon the next day just so you can burn it off, and most of all, don't gulp down your treat like a junkie who just escaped from court-ordered rehab. The slower you eat, the more you can savour it and the more quickly you'll feel satiated. Then brush your teeth and recommit to your programme.

The science of metabolic restoration may be complicated, but the path to success is refreshingly simple: do the best you can as often as you can, and blame society for the rest.

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The Get-Back-in-Shape Workout

NO MATTER WHAT YOUR LEVEL OF FITNESS,
THIS PLAN WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE

T

here could be any number of reasons why you suddenly decided that you want to get back in shape. Perhaps you signed up to coach your son's cricket team or you've been invited to join the company soccer league. Or perhaps you felt a tightness in your hamstring reaching down to tie your shoes and realised – smartly – that this was your body's first warning signal for a bit of needed change. But no matter what your reason is for getting back in shape, no matter if you haven't done more than open the fridge door in weeks or if you are already active and athletic, there are three important parts of overall fitness you need to focus on.



FLEXIBILITY Muscles shorten and tighten from lack of use, making you susceptible to injury and triggering symptoms in other parts of the body such as lower ,back pain.

STRENGTH By performing resistance exercises, you'll raise your metabolism and burn more fat. You'll also build power by increasing your fast-twitch muscle fibres and develop a stronger core, which will support your spine and prevent back problems.

CARDIOVASCULAR CAPACITY Whether it's through the strength-building circuits or aerobic exercise like walking, running, swimming and playing sports, you'll improve your lung function and capacity, as well as your heart's ability to pump efficiently.

WHAT TO EXPECT

THE TOTAL-BODY PROGRAMME

These workouts are designed for people who don't already exercise and want to start from scratch. And we know you have a busy life, so we've chosen the exercises with that in mind.

→ THE WORKOUTS ARE SHORT

You can do them in 20 to 35 minutes. But they're intense! The strength-building moves focus on working the large muscle groups of the chest, back and legs. That way you'll exercise and build your biggest "landmass," getting the most kilojoule-burning benefit for your time. Then, we've added moves that'll shore up crucial smaller muscle groups – like those in your shoulders surrounding your rotator cuff.

→ YOU CAN EXERCISE AT HOME

Strength Workout #1 is a fast-paced circuit using minimal equipment, so it can be done anywhere. Strength Workout #2 is a more-advanced gym workout, since it includes some exercises you may not have equipment for at home. However, even this workout features moves to do at home with minimal gear. And the aerobic and interval workouts can also be done just about anywhere.

→ YOU WON'T NEED MUCH EQUIPMENT

You can get started today by doing the flexibility moves and some of the body-weight-only exercises on the following pages. Later, all you'll have to buy are a few simple weights, exercise bands, an exercise bench or step and a stability ball (also known as a Swiss ball). We recommend getting a few pairs of dumbbells in varying weights. When you go to the gym, we suggest you avoid weight-lifting machines for the most part because they force your muscles to move in a single direction that's often nothing like the way your body moves in real life.

HERE'S WHAT WE HAVE
PLANNED FOR YOU IN THIS
WELL-ROUNDED STRENGTH
AND AEROBIC PROGRAMME

STRENGTH WORKOUT #1

A total-body, at-home circuit of 10 strength-building moves that should take you about 20 minutes to complete. Do this twice a week. Stretch before and after each workout.

STRENGTH WORKOUT #2

A total-body, gym-based routine that is performed more slowly using heavier resistance. Do this 35-minute workout once a week. You can do these two basic strength workouts for months by increasing the weight as you get stronger and mixing in other exercises to keep your muscles challenged.

CORE WORKOUT

These exercises will shore up your midsection and protect your back. The core workout doesn't involve crunches, but that doesn't mean it'll be a snap. It focuses on more important stability muscles than the for-show rectus abdominus. You'll do a core workout two days a week, attached to any of the strength or light-cardio workouts.

AEROBIC WORKOUT

Aerobic workouts build cardiovascular fitness. Ours include brisk walking, which is perfect for those who've been sedentary for a long time, plus interval training workouts for running, biking or swimming. You will do an aerobic workout two or three days a week: one day for light cardiovascular exercise, such as walking; one day for a high-intensity interval workout; and an optional cross-training/fun day.

Here's one option for your week's workout schedule, followed by the details, broken down by day.

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
Stretch	Stretch	Stretch	Stretch	Stretch	Stretch	Rest
Strength Workout #1	Aerobic: Light Cardio	Strength Workout #2	Aerobic: Intervals	Strength Workout #1	Aerobic: Cross-train	
	Core			Core		

OPTIONAL

THE WORKOUTS

MONDAY

STRENGTH WORKOUT #1

Loosen up with a quick stretching routine. Then do these 10 exercises in two circuits: complete one set of each exercise in order, without resting between exercises, rest five minutes (after the first circuit), then repeat the circuit. Cool down with another quick stretching routine of your choice.

EXERCISE	REPETITIONS	SETS
Warm-up moves and stretches		1
Goblet squat	12-15	2
High step-up	12-15 each leg	2
Step push-up	10-20	2
Single-arm dumbbell row	12-15 each arm	2
Biceps curl	12-15	2
Triceps kickback	12-15 each arm	2
Scaption	12-15	2
Explosive jump	12-15	2
Internal shoulder rotation	12-15 each arm	2
External shoulder rotation	12-15 each arm	2
Cool-down stretches		1

1 SET IN EACH CIRCUIT

AFTER THE SECOND CIRCUIT

TUESDAY

LIGHT CARDIO & BASIC CORE WORKOUT

Do a selection of warm-up moves and stretches, then a brisk walk or bike ride for 20 to 30 minutes. Once you improve your aerobic fitness, turn this light walking workout into a run or other moderate-intensity cardio workout. Finish with the basic core exercises listed in the chart.

Warm-up moves and stretches 1 set
Brisk walk or bike ride 20 to 30 minutes

BASIC CORE WORKOUT	REPETITIONS	SETS	REST
Superman	10	1	15 seconds
Hip raise	20	1	15 seconds
Bird dog	20	1	15 seconds
Arm and leg raising and lowering	20	1	15 seconds
Two-handed chop	10	1	15 seconds

ON EACH SIDE

WEDNESDAY

STRENGTH WORKOUT #2

Start with your warm-up moves and stretches. Do two sets of each exercise before moving on to the next exercise. For this workout, use a heavier weight than you did in Strength Workout #1 (except for the side-lying external rotation), a weight heavy enough so that your last repetition is very challenging.

EXERCISE	REPS	SETS	REST
Warm-up moves and stretches		1	
Barbell front squat	5-8	2	30-60 seconds
Dumbbell lunge	5-8	2	30-60 seconds
Dumbbell incline bench press	5-8	2	30-60 seconds
Seated cable row	5-8	2	30-60 seconds
Biceps curl to overhead press	5-8	2	30-60 seconds
Cable triceps pressdown	5-8	2	30-60 seconds
Dead lift	5-8	2	30-60 seconds
Front lat pulldown	5-8	2	30-60 seconds
Side-lying external rotation	10	2	30-60 seconds
High-knee skips	20	2	30-60 seconds
Plyometric box jumps	10	2	3-5 minutes
Cool-down stretches		1	

EACH ARM

THURSDAY

20- TO 30-MINUTE CARDIO & INTERVAL WORKOUT

Start with your warm-up moves and stretches. Choose one of the following interval workouts or make up your own. End with cool-down stretches.

EASY

INTERVAL 1

5 minutes walk
15 minutes run/walk
(Total: 20 minutes)

INTERVAL 2

5 minutes walk
20 minutes run/walk done faster
5 minutes walk
(Total: 30 minutes)

ADVANCED

INTERVAL 3

WARM-UP

5 minutes brisk walk
3 minutes moderate-pace run (to increase heart rate)

WORK

1 minute increased speed (not a sprint, but you're moving)

ACTIVE REST

3 minutes decreased speed to a comfortable pace (to lower heart rate)

WORK

1 minute increased speed for the first 30 seconds, then 90% of maximum speed for the next 30 seconds

ACTIVE REST

3 minutes decreased speed to a comfortable pace

WORK

1 minute increased speed for the first 30 seconds, then all out for the next 30 seconds

ACTIVE REST

3 minutes decreased speed to a comfortable pace

COOL-DOWN

5 minutes walk, briskly at first, then casually for the last 2 minutes
(Total: 25 minutes)

INTERVAL 4

WARM-UP

5 minutes slow jog
4 minutes moderate-pace run

WORK

30 seconds increased speed to 80% of your best effort

ACTIVE REST

90 seconds decreased speed to a comfortable pace (alternate between Work and Active Rest phases, six to eight times)

COOL-DOWN

3 minutes slow jog, 2 minutes walk
(Total: 26 to 30 minutes)

FRIDAY

STRENGTH WORKOUT #1 & ADVANCED CORE WORKOUT

Start with the warm-up moves and stretches. Complete one set of each exercise in order, rest five minutes, then repeat the circuit. Rest for a few minutes, then do a core workout. You may repeat the basic core routine shown on Tuesday's chart or try one set of the advanced core exercises listed below. After the core moves, do a brief cool-down.

EXERCISE	REPETITIONS	SETS
Warm-up moves and stretches		1
Goblet squat	12–15	2
High step-up	12–15 each leg	2
Step push-up	10–20	2
Single-arm dumbbell row	12–15 each arm	2
Biceps curl	12–15	2
Triceps kickback	12–15 each arm	2
Scaption	12–15	2
Explosive jump	12–15	2
Internal shoulder rotation	12–15 each arm	2
External shoulder rotation	12–15 each arm	2

1 SET IN EACH CIRCUIT

ADVANCED CORE WORKOUT	REPETITIONS	REST
Leg-lowering drill	10–12	15 seconds
Swiss-ball pull-in	10–20	15 seconds
V-spread toe touch	10–20	15 seconds
Side plank	10–20	15 seconds
Side plank with reach under	10–20	
Cool-down stretches	1	

ON EACH SIDE

EVERY DAY

STRETCHING FOR EXERCISE

Here's how to warm up and cool down when working out.

WARM-UP STRETCHES	DURATION
Prisoner squat	10–15 reps
Trunk rotation	10 reps
Knee hug to lunge	10 reps each leg
Inch worm	5 reps
Hip circle	5 reps each leg, hold 10 seconds
Inch worm	10 reps each leg
Butt stretch	30 seconds each leg
Aeroplane	5 reps each leg, hold 10 seconds
Back lunge and twist	10 reps each leg
Butterfly stretch	15–30 seconds
Calf stretch	30 seconds
Anterior shoulder stretch	15 seconds each arm

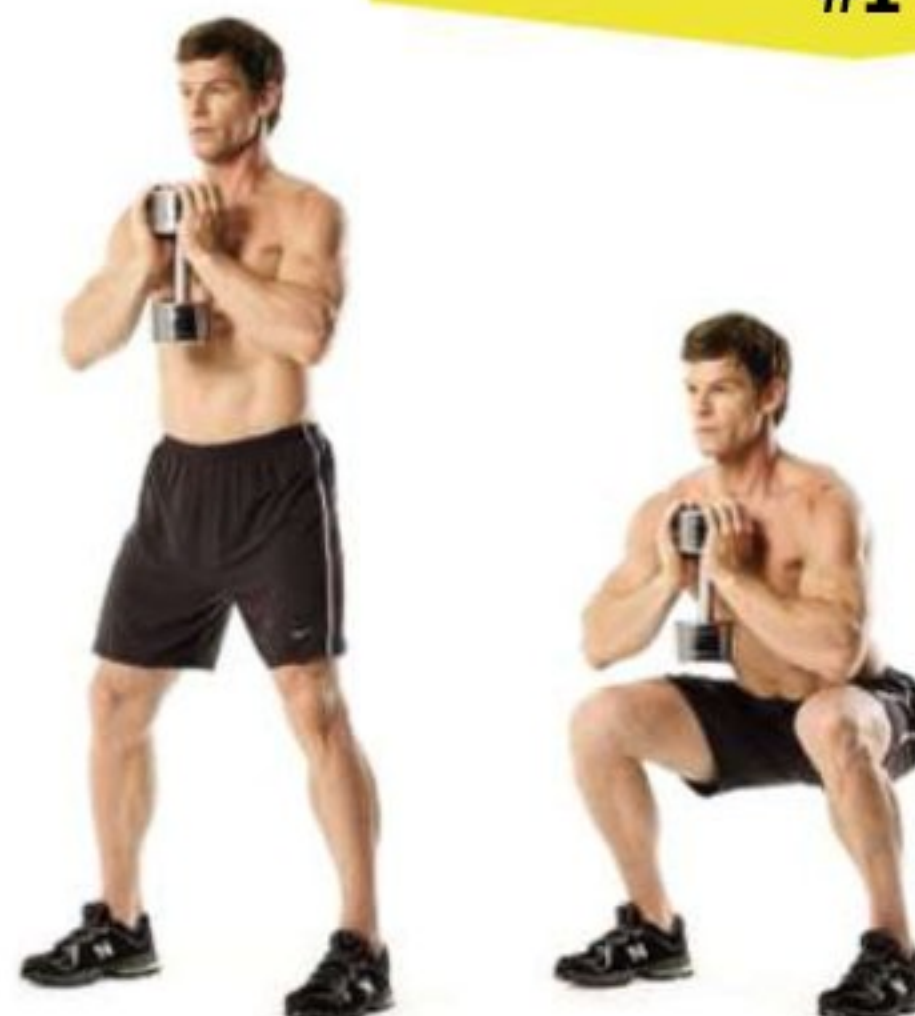
COOL-DOWN STRETCHES	DURATION
Calf stretch	30 seconds
Hamstring stretch	30 seconds each leg
Butt stretch	30 seconds each leg
Quad stretch	30 seconds each leg
Anterior shoulder stretch	15 seconds each arm

THE EXERCISES

STRENGTH WORKOUT #1

GOBLET SQUAT

Hold a heavy dumbbell vertically in front of your chest by grasping one end of the weight with both hands. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Push your hips backwards, then bend your knees and squat as deeply as you can. Keep your back and head as upright as possible throughout the lift. Push yourself quickly back to the starting position. Do 12 to 15 reps.



TIP Full squats like this strengthen knee tendons better than half squats, which tend to overdevelop quadriceps. Perfect the technique before using heavier weights.

HIGH STEP-UP

Stand in front of an exercise bench or step that's 30 to 45 centimetres off the ground – high enough so that when you place your foot on it, your knee is at a 90-degree angle. Place your left foot on the bench and push your body up until your left leg is straight and you are standing on that one leg on the bench, your right foot hanging behind the bench. Lower your body until your right foot touches the floor. That's one repetition. Then immediately press your left foot into the bench again to lift yourself up. Do 12 to 15 reps, and then repeat the exercise using your right leg.



TIP Focus on pushing down through your heel, rather than your toes. That will help you keep your knee over your ankle. Extending your knee over your toes can lead to injury. Hold a pair of dumbbells to make the exercise more challenging.

STEP PUSH-UP

Assume a push-up position, but instead of placing your hands on the floor, place them on a step, bench or other stable, raised structure. With your arms extended straight, keep your back flat and your face down, and contract your abs. Bend your elbows and lower yourself until your chest is about 3 centimetres off the step. Pause a second, then explosively push yourself up. Do 10 to 20 reps.

TIP This is a great chest move for those who aren't strong enough for regular push-ups. The higher the step, the easier it will be to perform the push-up. As you get stronger, progressively lower the elevation. Once you become proficient enough to knock out 20 hands-on-the-floor push-ups, try elevated-feet push-ups – even harder – in which you rest your toes on the step and place your hands on the floor.



SINGLE-ARM DUMBBELL ROW

Grab a dumbbell in your left hand and bend forwards, placing your right hand and right knee on a flat bench. Keep your back flat and your upper body parallel to the floor. Let your left arm hang straight down from your shoulder with your palm facing inwards. Raise your left upper arm until it's just past parallel to the floor, with your elbow above the level of your torso. Pause, lower the weight and repeat. Do 12 to 15 reps, then repeat the move with your right hand holding the dumbbell and your left hand and knee on the bench.



TIP For a change of pace, try a dumbbell piston row. You won't need a bench. Stand with legs shoulder-width apart and hold a dumbbell in each hand. (They should be lighter than the ones you use for single-arm rows.) Bend at the waist and allow the weights to hang below you. With your palms facing each other, rapidly row each dumbbell up to the side of your chest in alternating-arm fashion – like a piston.

BICEPS CURL

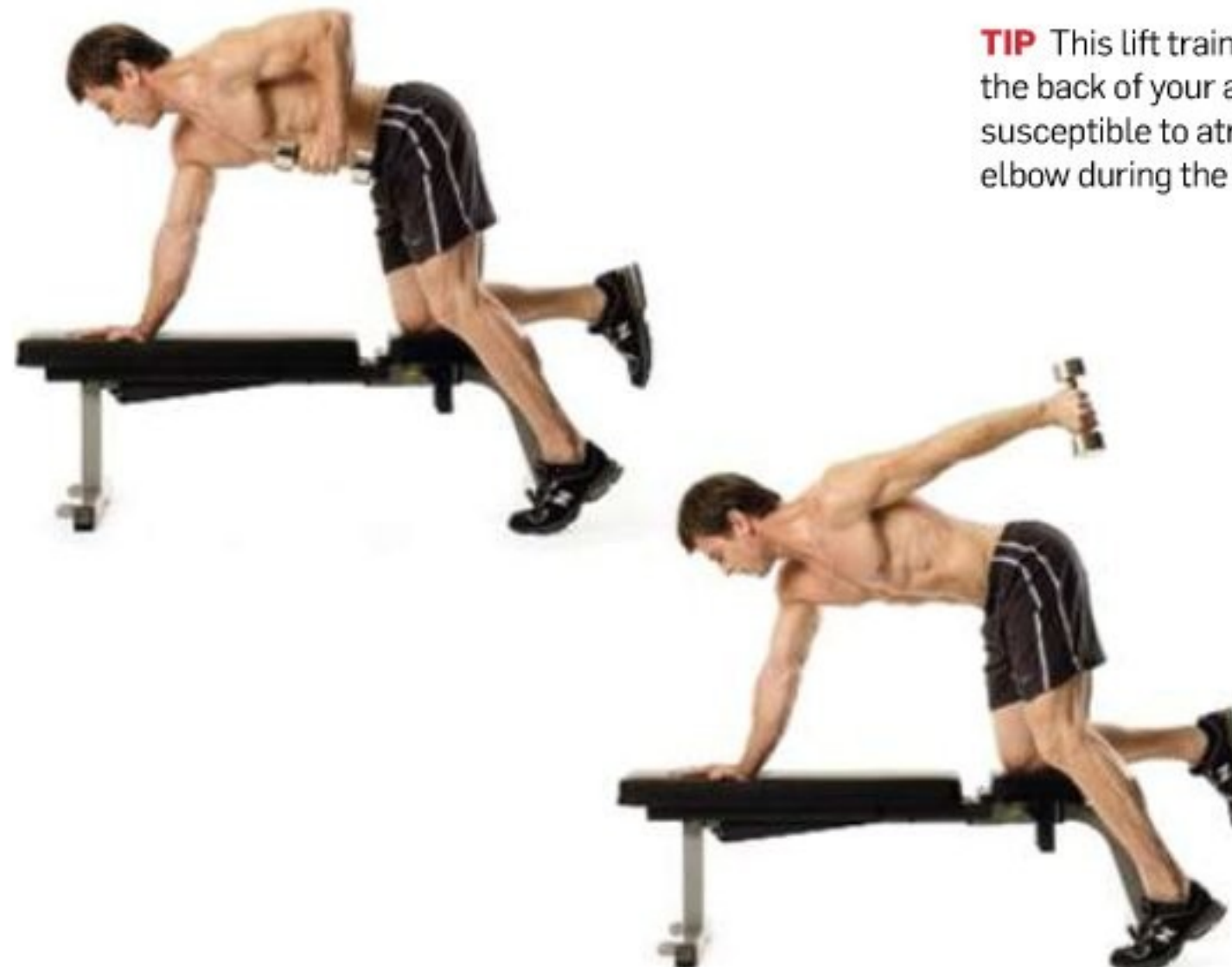
Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and a dumbbell in each hand, hands at your sides, palms facing inwards. Keeping your upper arms perfectly still, curl the weights up quickly, rotating to an underhand grip, until they reach the front of your shoulders. Lower the weights more slowly, to a two-count. Do 12 to 15 reps.



TIP If your wrists hurt, don't rotate your hands to an underhand grip, but keep your palms facing inwards as you curl your arms.

TRICEPS KICKBACK

Stand next to a bench holding a lightweight dumbbell in your left hand. Bend forwards and place your right knee and right hand on a bench. Your torso should be parallel to the floor and your right leg should be under your hips for support. Bend your left arm and press the inside of your elbow against your side so that your upper arm is parallel to the floor and the dumbbell rests next to your chest, your palm facing inwards. Slowly, press the weight back until your arm is straight. Pause a second, then return the weight to your chest by bending your arm but keeping your elbow stationary. Complete 12 to 15 reps, then repeat the exercise with your right arm, placing your left knee and left hand on the bench.



TIP This lift trains the muscles in the back of your arms, which are susceptible to atrophy. Moving your elbow during the lift is cheating.



TIP Perform this exercise in front of a mirror to check your form. This movement is important for healthy shoulder-joint mechanics.

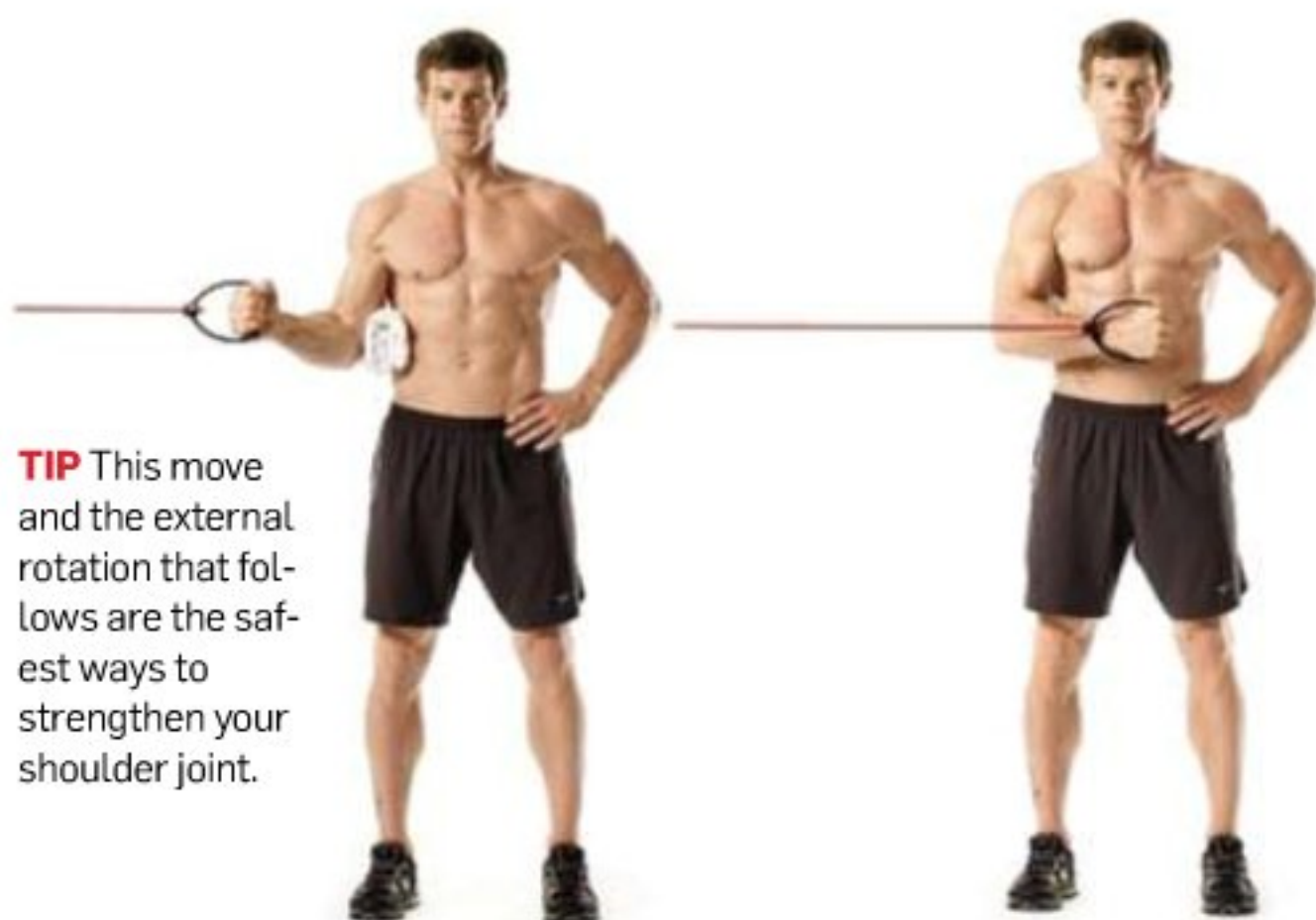
SCAPTION

Stand straight with your feet shoulder-width apart. Hold a light-weight dumbbell in each hand at your sides. Rotate the dumbbells so that your thumbs are up (palms facing inwards) and raise your arms up to shoulder height at a 45-degree angle from your torso. Your arms should make a "Y" shape in front of you. As you raise your arms, pull in and depress your scapulas (shoulder blades). Be careful to avoid shrugging your shoulders to raise the weight. Once the dumbbells reach shoulder height, lower them following that same Y-shaped path. Do 12 to 15 reps.



EXPLOSIVE JUMP

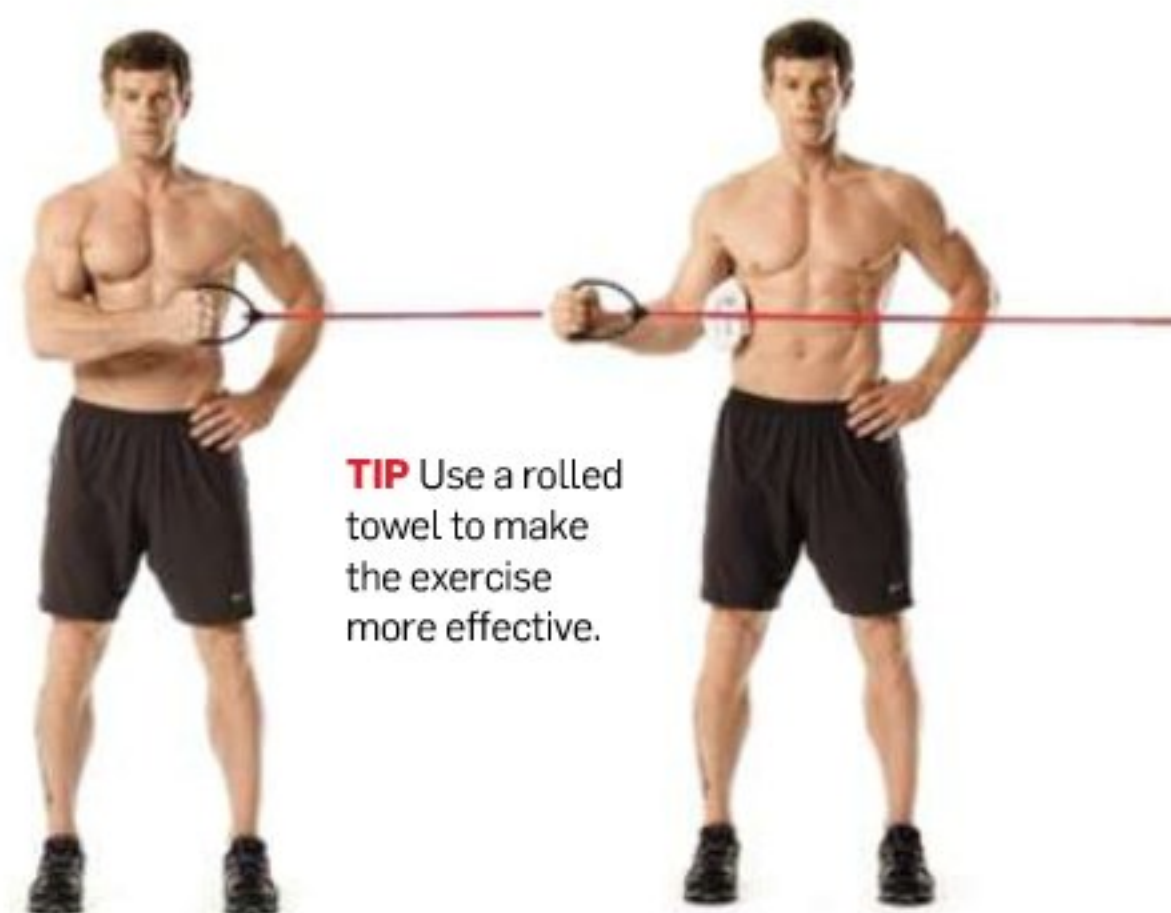
Stand with your feet slightly more than hip-width apart. Swing your arms back as you dip down and bend the hips and knees. Drive your arms forwards and up as you jump explosively off the floor. Immediately dip down and repeat. Do 12 to 15 reps.



TIP This move and the external rotation that follows are the safest ways to strengthen your shoulder joint.

INTERNAL SHOULDER ROTATION WITH BAND

Tie a length of exercise tubing or stretch band to a fixed object that's about hip height. Stand with the band to your right and hold the end of it in your right hand with your elbow bent 90 degrees, your upper arm and elbow pressed against your side, and your forearm parallel to the floor. For a greater range of motion, add a small rolled towel between your arm and side. The palm of your right hand should face inwards. Step to the side away from the fixed object to stretch the band. Keeping your elbow by your side, move your hand towards your stomach as far as is comfortable. Slowly release under tension to return to the starting position. Do 12 to 15 reps. Then turn around and repeat the exercise using your left arm.

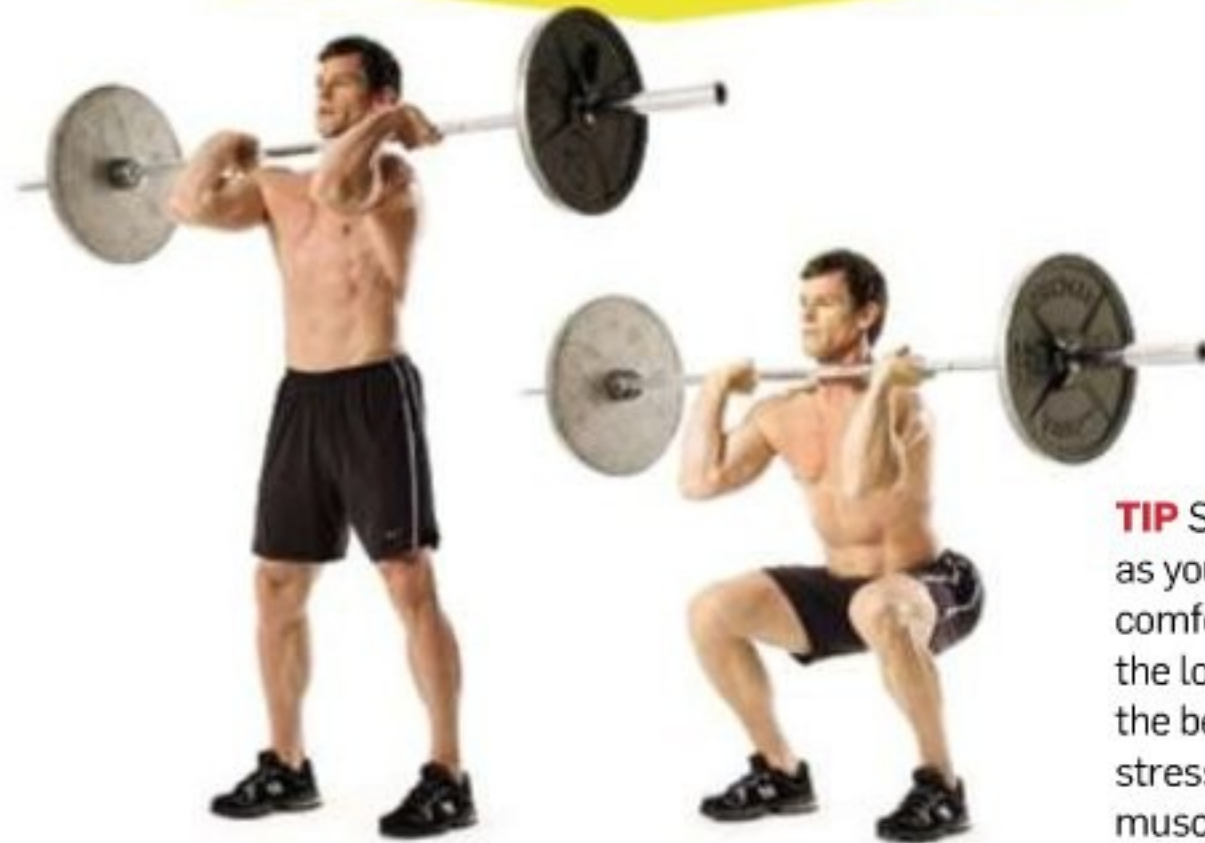


TIP Use a rolled towel to make the exercise more effective.

EXTERNAL SHOULDER ROTATION WITH BAND

Tie a length of exercise tubing or stretch band to a fixed object that's about hip height. Stand with the band to your left and hold the end of it in your right hand with your elbow bent 90 degrees, your upper arm and elbow pressed against your side, and your forearm parallel with the floor. The palm of your right hand should face in towards your torso. Step to the side away from the fixed object to stretch the band. Your forearm should rest, under the tension of the band, against your stomach. Pivoting on your elbow still pressed against your side, move your right forearm out and away from you as far as is comfortable. Pause a second, then slowly release, bringing your hand back across your body. Do 12 to 15 reps, then switch sides and perform the exercise using your left arm.

STRENGTH WORKOUT #2

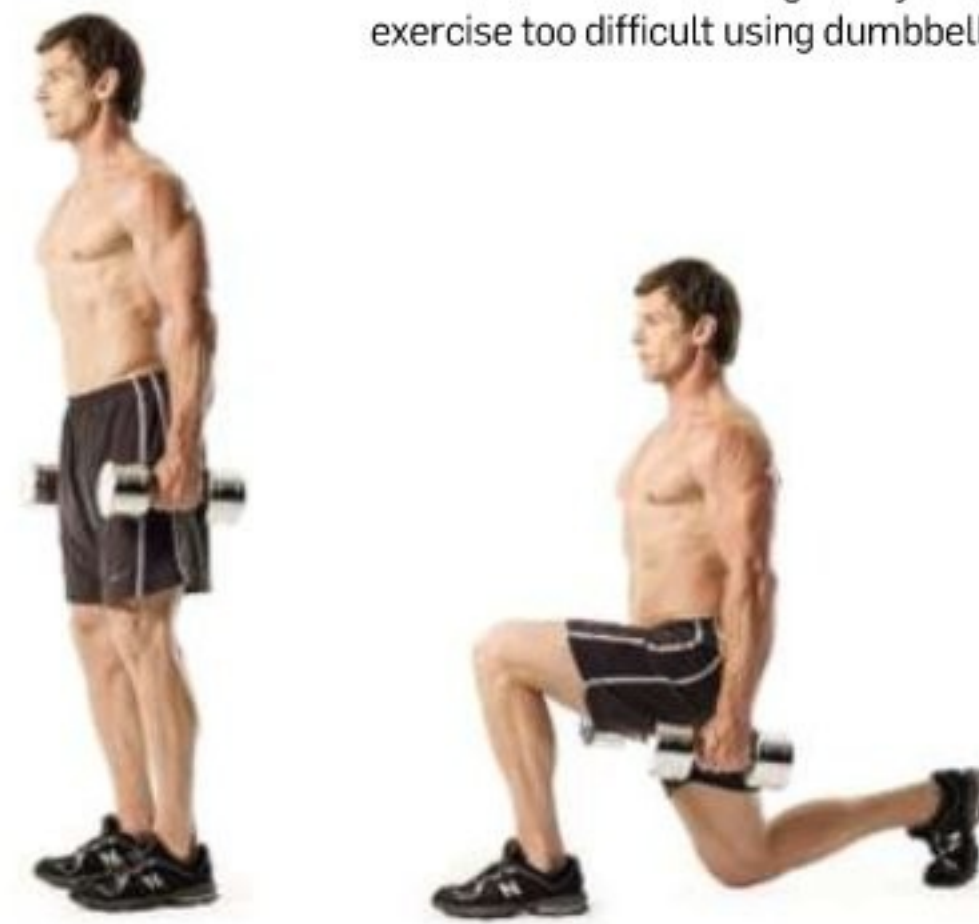


TIP Squat as low as you can comfortably go; the lower you go, the better the stress on your muscles.

BARBELL FRONT SQUAT

Grab a barbell with an overhand grip, your hands just beyond shoulder width on the bar. Lift it up and hold it against the front of your body, just above your shoulders. Raise your upper arms so they are just about parallel to the floor, allowing the bar to roll back against your shoulders and on top of your fingers. Place your feet shoulder-width apart and keep your knees slightly bent, your back straight and eyes forwards. Slowly lower your body by bending your knees as if sitting into a chair, keeping your back in its natural alignment. When your thighs are a bit lower than parallel to the floor, pause, then push forcefully with your legs to return to the starting position. Do 5 to 8 reps.

TIP Be sure to keep your knee from extending over your toes, which can cause injury. Lunges can be done without weights if you find the exercise too difficult using dumbbells.



DUMBBELL LUNGE

Stand with your feet together, holding a dumbbell in each hand, hands at your sides, palms facing in. Take a large step forwards with your left leg. When your front thigh is parallel to the floor and your back knee is a few centimetres off the floor, hold for a second. Then return to the starting position, and repeat with your right leg. Do 5 to 8 reps.

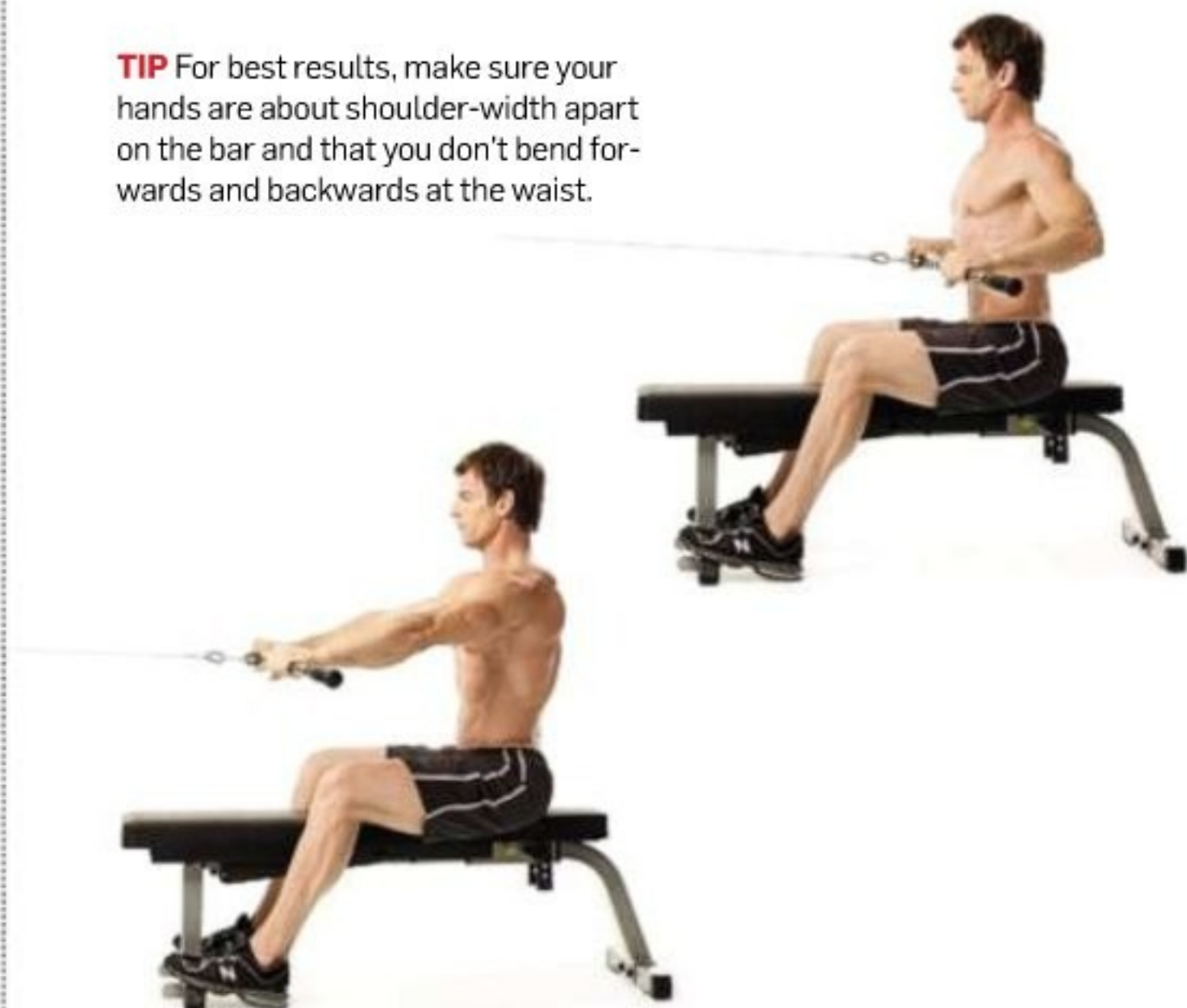
TIP The bench should not be tilted more than 30 degrees for this lift.



DUMBBELL INCLINE BENCH PRESS

Lie on an incline bench with feet flat on the floor. Hold a pair of dumbbells above your chest, arms extended, using an overhand grip. Lower the dumbbells towards the sides of your chest (stop when your elbows are at torso level or just a little lower), pause and then quickly push them back up to the starting position. Do 5 to 8 reps.

TIP For best results, make sure your hands are about shoulder-width apart on the bar and that you don't bend forwards and backwards at the waist.



SEATED CABLE ROW

Sit at a cable row station or attach a straight bar to a cable machine. Grasp the handle with both hands using an overhand grip. Sit up with a straight back, brace your feet and pull your shoulders back. Forcefully pull the bar to your abdomen by bending your arms and squeezing your shoulder blades together. Pause for a second with your blades together, then take two seconds to return to the starting position. Don't lean forwards on the return. Do 5 to 8 reps.

TIP If you have rotator cuff impingement, avoid the overhead press part of this lift.



BICEPS CURL TO OVERHEAD PRESS

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and a dumbbell in each hand, hands at your sides, palms facing inwards. Curl both arms up while turning the back of your hands outwards to an underhand grip. When the dumbbells reach your shoulders, press them overhead while twisting your hands inwards so that your palms face forwards at the top of the lift. Do 5 to 8 reps.

TIP Avoid using your shoulders to cheat the weight down by concentrating on keeping your elbows locked against your sides. You won't need a lot of weight if you do this correctly.



CABLE TRICEPS PRESSDOWN

Attach a rope or V-bar to an overhead cable pulley station. Stand facing the station with your feet shoulder-width apart. Grasp the rope, palms facing inwards, and pull down until your arms are bent at about a 90-degree angle. Keeping your upper arms close to your body and your elbows from moving, push down on the rope until your arms are almost straight.

TIP To improve your form, imagine a string attached to your head, pulling you up like a puppet. This will keep you from hunching and hitching.



BARBELL DEAD LIFT

Stand with the bar on the floor in front of you so it just touches your shins. Push your hips back and grasp the bar with your hands just outside your calves, one hand using an overhand grip, the other grabbing the bar underhand. Keeping your back straight and chest up, forcefully drive your heels into the floor and stand up. Then lower the bar back to the floor. Do 5 to 8 reps.

TIP To avoid injury, don't bring the bar down behind your head.



FRONT LAT PULL-DOWN

Stand facing a lat pull-down machine. Reach up and grasp the bar with an overhand grip that's 10 to 15 centimetres wider than your shoulders. Sit on the seat, letting the resistance of the bar extend your arms above your head. Pull the bar down until it touches your upper chest. Hold this position for a second, then return to the starting position. Do 5 to 8 reps.

SIDE-LYING SINGLE-ARM EXTERNAL ROTATION

Lie on your left side with your left arm bent and your head resting on your left hand. Hold a light dumbbell in your right hand. Important: it should be only 0.5 to one kilogram; you don't want to use anything much heavier for the delicate rotator cuff. Bend your right arm 90 degrees and tuck your upper arm against your right side. Let the weight hang in front of your midsection. Keeping your upper arm stationary, slowly rotate your forearm until it points towards the ceiling. Then rotate your forearm back to the starting position. Do 10 reps. Then turn over and repeat the exercise with your left arm.



TIP If you don't have a 0.5 or one-kilo-gram dumbbell, use a large can for resistance. You'll risk injury with anything much heavier.



HIGH-KNEE SKIPS

Keeping your upper body straight, drive your knee as high up and out as you can, alternating your knees while skipping. As you drive each knee up, swing your opposite hand up to get as much vertical lift as possible. Do about 20 skips.



TIP For a smoother rhythm, add a hop on the downwards step.

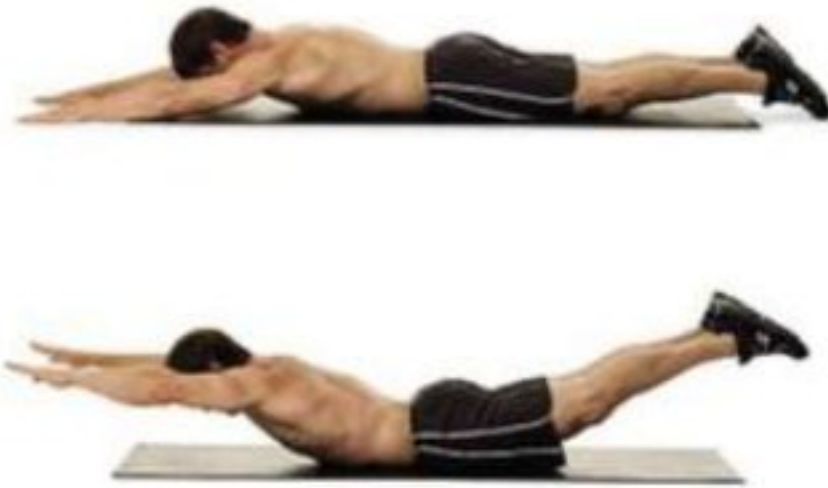
PLYOMETRIC BOX JUMPS

Stand facing a stable, 30- to 45-centimetre tall box or bench. Crouch down while throwing your arms behind you. Then swing your arms forwards as you explosively jump onto the box. Land on both feet, stand, then lightly jump forwards off the box, landing in a crouch to absorb the impact. Turn around to face the box again. Do 10 reps.



TIP This power move works your entire lower body, especially your hamstrings and gluteals.

BASIC CORE WORKOUT



SUPERMAN

Lie facedown with your arms extended straight out in front of your head, palms on the floor. Extend your back, lifting your arms, head and chest while also lifting your legs. Hold that position for two seconds, then return to the starting position. Do 10 reps.

TIP Make it harder: from the starting position, extend your left leg out straight on the floor. Raise your hips and raise that straight leg until it forms a line from foot to shoulders. Complete the repetitions, switch sides and repeat.



HIP RAISE

Lie on your back with your knees bent to 90 degrees and your feet flat on the floor. Place your arms at your sides with your hands palms up and a few centimetres away from your hips. Raise your hips so your body forms a straight line from your shoulders to your knees. Hold for two seconds while tightening your abs and butt. Take two seconds to lower yourself to the starting position. Do 20 reps.

TIP Keep your abs and back tight throughout the movement. This is a good move for people who suffer from lower back pain or would like to firm their butts.



BIRD DOG

Get down on all fours with your hands and feet shoulder-width apart, your back straight and head in alignment with your back. Lift your left leg out behind you while simultaneously lifting your right arm straight out in front of you. Hold for two seconds, then switch sides, lifting your right leg and your left arm. Continue alternating in this way. Do 20 reps.

TIP First try this move without weights to get a feel for it.



ARM AND LEG RAISING AND LOWERING

Grab two lightweight dumbbells and lie on the floor with your knees bent, feet on the floor and your arms at your sides. While contracting your abs, lift your right arm over your head while lifting your left bent leg off the floor. Now lift your left arm (with dumbbell) and right leg while simultaneously lowering your left leg to the floor and your right arm to your side. Continue alternating arms and legs this way: when one arm and leg come up, the opposite arm and leg go down. Do 20 reps.

TIP Perform this move slowly and under control to avoid allowing the momentum of the dumbbell to wrench your back.



TWO-HANDED CHOP

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your hands holding a light dumbbell above your left shoulder. Rotate your torso to the right as you extend your arms and lower the dumbbell to the outside of your right knee, bending slightly at the waist and knees. Do 10 reps. Then, switch sides, starting with the dumbbell above your right shoulder and moving it towards the outside of your left knee.

ADVANCED CORE WORKOUT

TIP Try to lower your legs farther with each repetition.



LEG-LOWERING DRILL

Lie on your back and raise your legs over your hips, with your knees bent at 90 degrees. Press the small of your back into the floor to eliminate the arch in your lower back. Keep this position as you slowly lower your legs, taking three to five seconds. Upon reaching the lowest point at which you can still keep your back flat (without touching your heels to the floor), raise your legs to your chest. Do 10 to 20 reps.



STABILITY-BALL PULL-IN

Assume a push-up position with your hands slightly more than shoulder-width apart. Rest your shins on a stability ball. Keep your back flat. Now, keeping your abs tight and your arms straight, draw your knees towards your chest, rolling the ball towards you until your toes are on top of the ball and your thighs are perpendicular to the ground. Slowly straighten your legs so that the ball rolls back to the starting position. Complete 10 to 20 reps.

TIP Once you master this move, make it harder by doing it while squeezing a stability ball between your ankles or holding a light medicine ball in your hands.



V-SPREAD TOE TOUCH

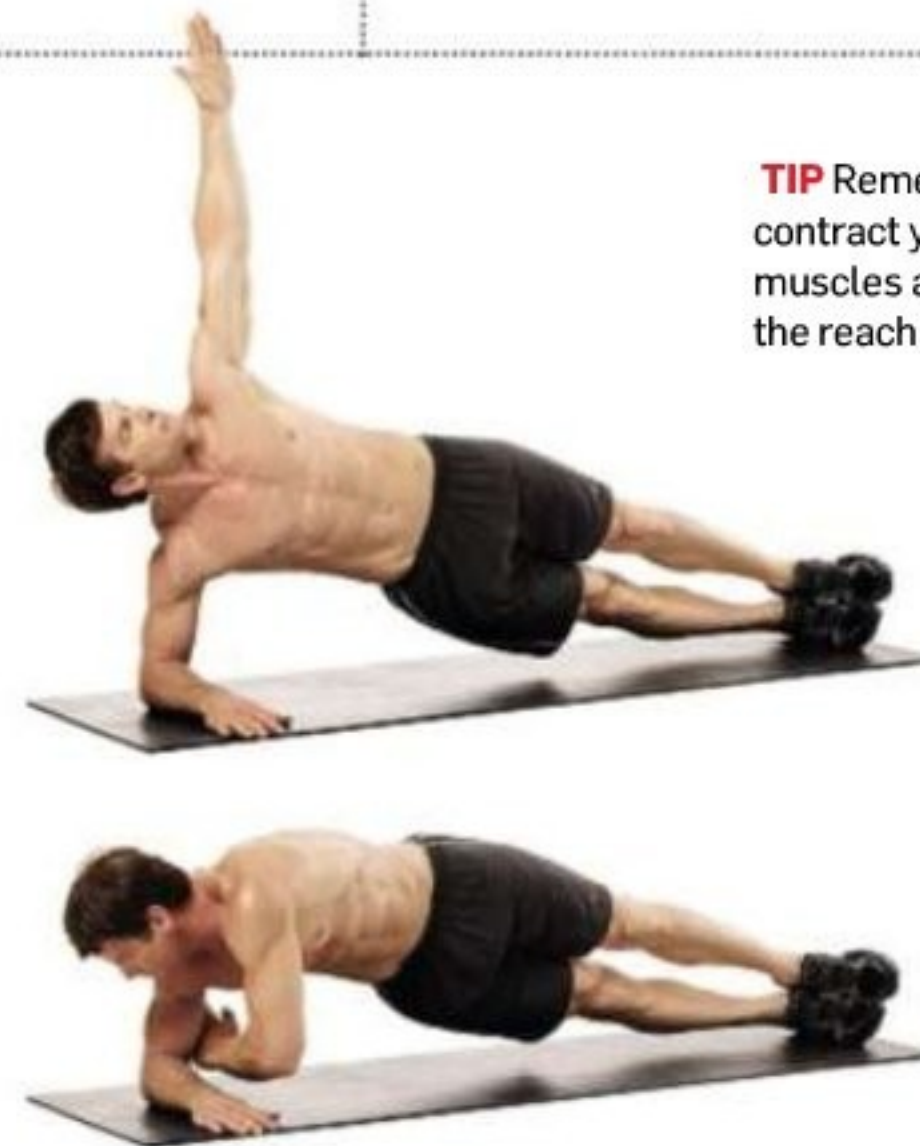
Lie flat on your back with your legs up. Spread your legs slightly to form a "V". Raise your arms between your legs. Curl your shoulder blades up and reach towards your right foot with both hands while tightening your abs. Hold for a second, then relax back down to the starting position. Next, curl and point towards your left foot, and return to the starting position. Do 10 to 20 reps.

TIP Work up to holding a side plank for 15 to 45 seconds, then repeat the exercise on your right side.



SIDE PLANK

Lie on your left side with your knees straight and your feet stacked. Prop your upper body up on your left elbow and forearm, keeping your elbow directly below your left shoulder. Now contract your core muscles and raise your hips off the ground so that your body forms a straight line from your ankles to your shoulders. Hold the side plank for five seconds, then relax back down and rest for five seconds. Do 10 to 20 reps. Repeat the exercise while lying on your right side.



TIP Remember to contract your abs and butt muscles as you are doing the reach move.

SIDE PLANK WITH REACH UNDER

Lie on your right side with your knees straight and your feet stacked. Prop your upper body up on your right elbow and forearm, keeping your upper arm directly below your right shoulder. Raise your hips off the ground so that your body forms a straight line from your ankles to your shoulders. Lift your left arm and point towards the ceiling with your hand. Hold that position for two seconds. While holding that plank, reach under your body with your left hand, then raise it towards the ceiling again. That's one repetition. Do 10 to 20 reps, then lie on your left side and repeat the exercise with your right arm.

The Fit Man's Diet

THIS SIMPLE PLAN INCLUDES SEVEN SMART EATING UPGRADES,
A DECADE-BY-DECADE NUTRITION PLAN AND A BONUS "PERFECT DAY
OF EATING" TO HELP YOU TRANSFORM YOUR BODY FOR LIFE

BY HEATHER HURLOCK AND PHILLIP RHODES

W

hat does a fit man eat? Well that depends on you. Your body, your age, your goals. Now we know what you might be thinking, *So again, what should I eat?* Relax. You don't need a degree in rocket science or thousands of rands to spend on food to create a diet plan that's custom-made for you. We talked to top nutritionists to get the dish on the most important dietary changes you can make to become lean, strong and full of energy. We've broken it down into a few simple guidelines on how any man can upgrade his diet, and then included a guide to the best foods for your body during your 20s, 30s, 40s and beyond. You can call it your age-defying, libido-lifting, bone-toughening, cancer-beating, eyesight-saving, heart-strengthening, fat-fighting, decade-by-decade nutrition plan. In other words, how to fix everything with food. Sounds simple, right? Then dig in!



UPGRADE YOUR DIET

1. EAT THE CHAMPION OF BREAKFASTS

Eating the right breakfast is the single most important upgrade that men can make for weight loss, according to almost every expert we interviewed – yet a lot of men skip this meal altogether. “I’ve seen guys drop serious weight just by making sure they eat protein at breakfast,” says Dr Louis Aronne, director of the Comprehensive Weight Control Program at the Weill Cornell Medical Center. Study after study finds that skipping your morning meal leads to weight gain, adds Dr David Katz, director of the Yale Prevention Research Center and creator of the NuVal nutritional scoring system.

UPGRADE Think of your first meal of the day as the foundation of your dietary success. The key is to match protein and wholegrains with produce and healthy fats. Eat the bulk of your daily kilojoules – 30 to 35% of your total intake – in the morning and then taper off as the day goes on, says registered dietician Cynthia Sass, creator and co-author of *Flat Belly Diet!* To help you create breakfasts with the best mix of carbohydrates (45%), protein (30%) and fat (25%), we created this power-mix menu: choose one item from each category.

PROTEIN

EGGS

Those who eat eggs for breakfast lose 65% more weight than those who eat bread with the same number of kilojoules, according to a study in the *International Journal of Obesity*. Choose organic eggs packed with omega-3.

PEANUT BUTTER

Peanuts reduce the glycaemic response of a meal, increasing satiety and reducing food consumption later in the day, according to a study by the American College of Nutrition. Traditional peanut butter brands can contain detectable pesticide residue, so opt for an organic brand with no added salt or sugar.

YOGHURT

Low-fat yoghurt helps you eat less and stay full longer, reports a study in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*.

WHOLEGRAINS

OATS

Eating wholegrains such as oats protects against diabetes, insulin resistance and obesity. Choose oats that contains oats and nothing else. (That means no buying the instant chocolate-flavoured kind.)

WHOLEGRAIN SOURDOUGH BREAD

Studies show that sourdough causes fewer spikes in blood sugar than any other bread, so skip that pre-packaged pre-sliced stuff in the supermarket.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

BLUEBERRIES

Not only are they rich in antioxidants, but research also shows that blueberries boost cognitive function.

PRUNES

Prunes (sometimes also labelled as dried plums) help fight the hardening of arteries and pack a powerful antioxidant punch. A few more options include dried cherries or fresh cherries.

ORANGES

Just a single orange provides 130% of the RDA of vitamin C, which studies show quells inflammation.

BANANAS

Packed with potassium (about 300 milligrams per fruit), bananas reduce the risk of high blood pressure and stroke, and are also rich in fibre and vitamins B6 and C.

SPINACH

Fresh or frozen spinach is high in fibre and folate. Eating it helps build muscle and protects against weight gain and heart disease.

ASPARAGUS

A rich source of protodioscin, which is found to enhance erections and destroy cancer cells.

HEALTHY FATS

OLIVE OIL

One of the best sources of monounsaturated fats, olive oil keeps your testosterone levels topped off and your metabo-

lism revved. Extra-virgin olive oil provides the greatest health benefits. On the other hand, some chefs prefer to cook with canola oil, which is also a healthy fat, because it handles higher temperatures better.

WALNUTS

Eating walnuts often can reverse several parameters of brain ageing, as well as age-related motor and cognitive deficits, according to researchers at Tufts University.

SUNFLOWER OR PUMPKIN SEEDS

Sprinkle 1 tablespoon onto yoghurt or oats, or mix into smoothies for healthy fat and a boost of fibre.

AVOCADO

Rich in omega-3s, B vitamins and beta-Sitosterol, the avocado is that rare fruit that is heart-healthy and fends off prostate cancer.

BEVERAGES

GREEN TEA

Many nutritionists say green tea is the best beverage you can drink. It is good for your heart, improves brain function and fights cancer.

COFFEE

Hit three nutrition goals with one bean: java reduces your appetite, increases your metabolism and gives you a shot of antioxidants. For the best results, buy whole beans and grind them just before brewing to preserve the antioxidants.

2. CHANGE YOUR OIL(S)

The American Heart Association recommends that 25 to 35% of your kilojoules come from fats, with the majority coming from monounsaturated fats (MUFAs) and the rest from polyunsaturated fats, such as omega-3 fatty acids. MUFAs are healthy oils found in olives, nuts, seeds, avocados and even chocolate. These fats can lower your risk of heart disease, protect cells from damage and increase the amounts of valuable nutrients available from other foods. "MUFAs also improve insulin sensitivity and fight metabolic syndrome," explains registered dietician David Grotto, author of *101 Foods That Could Save Your Life*.

UPGRADE Cook only with olive oil or canola oil. Consume meat, milk and butter from grass-fed animals; these products are higher in omega-3s. Switch to a spread that contains heart-healthy plant stanols or sterols. Aim to eat cold-water fish three

times a week, says Sass. You can hit this target by varying the catch: add canned salmon to tomato sauce, eat one tuna sandwich a week and make salmon steaks your Friday-night treat instead of greasy fish and chips. Sashimi on the weekend is a bonus and has you sailing towards pescatarian territory.

3. TWEAK YOUR LEPTIN RECEPTOR

"Men need to redefine what fattening means," says Aronne. "Kilojoules and fat content aren't what make foods fattening. Foods are fattening if they provoke hormonal changes that trigger cravings or rebound hunger." One hormone in particular, leptin which is a co-factor in the process that tells your brain when you're full, becomes blunted by starchy, sweet, fatty and refined-carbohydrate foods. That's why a roll is fattening: it's a high-kilojoule load of refined carbohydrates. Guacamole isn't fattening because it is loaded with healthy fat and fibre and doesn't cause wild swings in insulin levels. Fattening foods generally contain hydrogenated vegetable oils (trans fats) and rapidly digested carbohydrates, such as refined grains, sugars and starches. "You eat more of these foods because they cause leptin resistance and then your body can't tell when it's full," says Aronne.

FATTENING High-fat dairy and meat

FILLING Lean meat and low-fat dairy

REASON Protein satiates, but fat can make you crave more kilojoules.

FATTENING Fruit juice

FILLING Fresh fruit and smoothies

REASON You need the fibre to feel full or you'll consume more kilojoules than you realise.

FATTENING Refined grains

FILLING Wholegrains

REASON The fibre in wholegrain bread and pasta slows digestion, easing blood sugar spikes and softening future cravings.

4. TRIPLE YOUR INTAKE OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

"Guys need as much antioxidant protection as they can get," says Katz. "Five servings is the minimum recommendation for a healthy diet. I aim for 12 to 15 servings myself."

UPGRADE To follow Katz's regimen, include fruits and vegetables with every meal and eat them first. Not only will you consume more vegetables and fewer kilojoules from other foods, but the fibre content will lower the glycaemic load of

your meal, helping you sidestep those swings in blood sugar that lead to hunger. Another of Katz's tricks: snack exclusively on fruits, vegetables and nuts. Diversity is also beneficial, says Sass. She advises trying at least one new fruit or vegetable each week, making sure that salads and fruit salads have at least four different colours. Two good examples to try: lettuce, yellow peppers, tomatoes and carrots or pineapple, oranges, kiwi and grapes.

5. BOOST YOUR TESTOSTERONE

Adequate protein consumption keeps testosterone levels up and feeds muscle growth. But keep in mind that men are not protein deficient; we all eat enough meat. "What we need more of is quality protein and fibre." Vary your intake between organic eggs, beef, fish, poultry and vegetarian sources such as beans and lentils. "Bean eaters live longer, and studies show an inverse relationship between bean consumption and weight, mostly due to beans' high fibre content," says Grotto. Try to eat $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of beans every day.

UPGRADE To get the high-quality protein and fibre you need, trade your beef for beans at least twice a week. For instance, Katz's go-to lunch sandwich replaces deli meats with bean dip. He also recommends combining beans with grains (for example, black bean stew with brown rice), or grains with nuts (quinoa salad with cashews, chicory and raisins) for complete protein with all the essential amino acids.

6. USE GERM WARFARE ON YOUR GUT

Probiotics, or "friendly" bacteria, are similar to the natural bacteria found in the gut, and they typically come from two groups: *Lactobacillus* or *Bifidobacterium*. Having enough of these good bugs in your GI tract aids digestion and can speed weight loss. Two probiotics, *Lactobacillus paracasei* and *Lactobacillus rhamnosus*, actually change how much fat is available for the body to absorb by influencing stomach acids during digestion, according to a recent study. Gastro docs think of the intestines as a road (with a lot of hairpin bends). Consuming probiotics keeps your network running smoothly and boosts the immune system. In a recent Swedish study, employees given *Lactobacillus reuteri* became sick less often and missed fewer days of work.

UPGRADE Foods containing live bacteria include yoghurt, soft cheeses, sauerkraut and gherkins. Consume one or two probiotics every day, says Sass.

7. THROW SALT OVER YOUR SHOULDER

Men have upped their sodium intake 48% since 1970. But studies have shown that eating less sodium can lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart disease, says Dr Steven E. Nissen, chairman of the Cleveland Clinic's department of cardiovascular medicine.

UPGRADE Choose the lower sodium varieties of crackers, pasta sauces, canned vegetables and any other foods with low-salt options, says Sass. Balance salty meals by adding high-potassium foods such as vegetables and fresh fruits, and if you have to add salt while cooking, do it at the end so the salt doesn't lose its flavour. Better yet, sprinkle chilli flakes or turmeric instead of salt. These spices not only kick up the flavour, they also reduce inflammation and boost heart health.



EAT RIGHT FOR LIFE

YOUR 20s THE BEAT-STRESS DECADE

The average guy marries at 27. And although we're sure it's a coincidence, most episodes of major depression start around the same time. Perhaps the cause is a culmination of 20-something stressors – the kind that come with 70-hour workweeks and late nights on the pub circuit. But it's not just your mind that pays the price. A busy, high-stress lifestyle often leads to a diet of convenience – one that's lacking in vitamins and minerals and overloaded with sugar, fat and kilojoules. The result: a body that never realises its full potential. See, this is the decade when your levels of muscle-building hormones – testosterone, DHEA and growth hormone – hit their peak, making it the best time for you to pack on muscle. It's also your last chance to lay down new bone; by the time you're 30, your skeletal system is set. Poor nutrition not only inhibits your ability to do both, but also increases your risk of disease, weight gain and mental breakdown – now, and for decades down the road.

But you can fight back with food; start today and you'll build a body that will last a lifetime.

THE PROBLEM Undetected depression

A cup of sugary coffee may boost your mood temporarily, but it won't improve your long-term outlook.

THE FIX Eat more seafood. A study in Finland found that people who eat more fish are 31% less likely to suffer from depression. The mood-boosting qualities of seafood most likely stem from the amount of omega-3 fatty acids contained in the fish. Eating enough of these healthy fats regulates the amount of omega-6 fatty acids in your body. While omega-6s are also key players in your body's development, unbalanced levels have been known to cause increased hunger, anger and depression. Focus on sustainable varieties of fish, like trout, wild salmon or sardines, which have the highest concentration of omega-3s.

THE PROBLEM Cancer is incubating

Every hour, your body replicates six billion cells, creating copies of your DNA. But if you don't consume enough folate – a B vitamin that helps construct those cells – your body could pro-

duce irregular DNA, which can eventually cause cancer, says Dr Ann Yelmokas McDermott, a nutrition scientist at Tufts University. Trouble is, folate is hard to come by. The best natural food source is chicken liver and few men get the folate their bodies require from fruits and vegetables.

THE FIX Have a cup of folate-fortified cereal four days a week. Choose a brand that provides at least 400 micrograms (mcg) of folate per serving. Then top it with ½ cup of blackberries, raspberries or strawberries. Berries aren't just a good source of folate; they're packed with antioxidants, which thwart cancer by neutralising DNA-damaging free radicals. Plus, fructose – the sugar found in fruits and berries – can help you recover from another 20-something problem: hangovers. That's because it speeds the rate at which your body metabolises alcohol by up to 25%.

THE PROBLEM No time to eat healthily

A recent study at the University of California at Berkeley found that nearly one-third of the average guy's diet is pure junk – foods that provide no nutritive value, just kilojoules.

THE FIX If you're going to go the convenience meal route, skip takeaways and opt for ready-made meals that combine lean meats and vegetables for an easy option that takes minutes to go from fridge to plate. Bonus: Harvard scientists found that every one-serving increase in daily vegetable intake decreases your risk of heart disease by 4%.

THE PROBLEM Fast-food addiction

In a study published in the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*, researchers discovered that men consume 4 200 kilojoules each time they visit a fast food restaurant. And, on average, men eat 1 100 more total kilojoules on the days they drive-thru instead of drive past. Indulge just twice a week and that's almost seven kilos of extra weight in a year.

THE FIX Limit yourself to one "single" burger or sandwich, and make it the only food item you order. (Choose water, diet soft drinks or unsweetened tea or coffee as your beverage.) This damage-control strategy ensures that you won't overeat. For instance, if you use this approach at McDonald's, the fewest kilojoules you'll down is a filling 1 090; the most is a manageable 3 050. Even an occasional Big Mac falls in between, at 2 340 kilojoules.

THE PROBLEM Untapped muscles

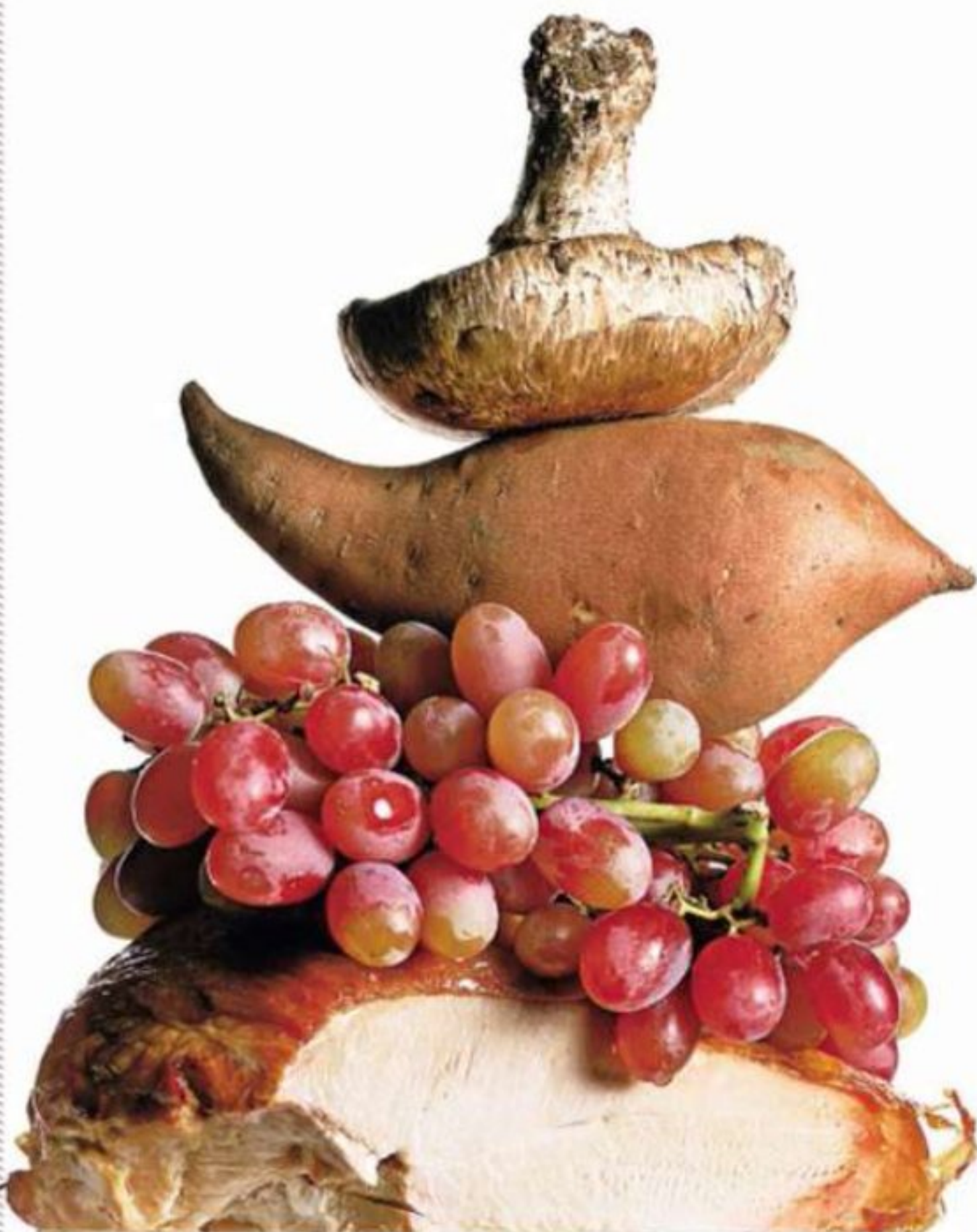
Your 20s are your brawn-building years. But to maximise muscle growth, you need the right raw materials.

THE FIX Beef. It's the perfect muscle food because it's packed with protein, zinc and creatine. Down a hefty portion of each with this taco-salad recipe from *US Men's Health* former cover model Gregg Avedon: brown 500g of extra-lean mince over medium heat. As it cooks, sprinkle it with black pepper, 2 teaspoons of chilli powder and a couple of dashes of Tabasco. Place the cooked beef, one diced tomato and 2 tablespoons of low-fat cheese over a bed of lettuce, and top with salsa.

THE PROBLEM You're becoming more injury prone

Bones are a lot like reclusive colleagues; until one snaps, you aren't likely to give them much thought.

THE FIX Drink two 250ml glasses of vitamin D-fortified low-fat milk every day. This provides your body with 600 milligrams (mg) of calcium and 5 micrograms (mcg) of vitamin D, the perfect combination of nutrients to build break-resistant bones. Plus, in a 20-year study, UK researchers determined that men who drink more than 180ml of milk a day have half the risk of stroke of men who drink less.



YOUR 30s THE MELT-FAT DECADE

The metabolic rate that allowed you to burn through super-size burgers in your 20s is slowing – dropping by 1% every four years. And even if the number on your scale isn't rising, it's likely you're getting fatter. In one study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, scientists found that men who managed to maintain their weight for 40 years still gained 1.3kg of fat each decade – while losing the equivalent of muscle. The likely reason: after you pass 30, your testosterone levels decrease by up to 1% a year. This means it becomes harder for you to build – or even maintain – metabolism-boosting muscle. (See the connection?) Another side effect: by 40, more than half of men develop some degree of erectile dysfunction. But sagging testosterone levels aren't your only health hazard. Starting at age 30, your systolic blood pressure rises four points per decade, and joint degeneration begins to occur. Here's how to turn back your biological clock – and keep midlife years in front of you.

THE PROBLEM Corroding joints

Even though arthritis doesn't usually set in until your 50s, the damage that causes it is happening now.

THE FIX Eat three 180g servings of cold-water fish weekly. Specifically, have salmon, mackerel, trout or tuna – each packs more than 1 000mg of fish oil. A UK study found that regularly consuming this amount of fish oil appeared to halt cartilage-eating enzymes in 86% of people who are facing joint-replacement surgery. This is because fish oil slows down cartilage degeneration and reduces factors that cause inflammation, says lead researcher Dr Bruce Caterson.

THE PROBLEM Rising blood pressure

Some men are always close to their boiling points. And new research from the Netherlands may explain why. The scientists discovered that besides the obvious factors – obesity, lack of physical activity and high salt consumption – diets containing too little potassium were the primary cause of hypertension. In their analysis, the scientists used 3 500mg daily as the cut off for defining a low potassium intake. The average intake for a man in his 30s? Only 3 100mg.

THE FIX Add ½ cup of beans, a banana or a handful of raisins to your daily diet. Each will increase your potassium intake by about 400mg a day, boosting you above that 3 500mg benchmark.

THE PROBLEM Waning sex drive

Don't wither away down under.

THE FIX Munch on two handfuls of walnuts, peanuts or almonds every day. Research shows that men with diets high in monounsaturated fat – the kind found in nuts – have higher testosterone levels than those who don't eat enough of the healthy fat. Nuts are also the best food source of arginine, an amino acid that improves blood flow throughout your body – including below the belt.

THE PROBLEM Your metabolism is slowing

By snacking on the right foods – those that are low in sugar, but rich in protein – you'll keep your metabolic furnace stoked, and be less likely to binge between meals.

THE FIX Have one slice of hard or semi-hard cheese – like Cheddar or Swiss cheese – two or three times a day. Cheese has seven grams of protein per slice and contains no sugar. That means it doesn't raise blood sugar levels, so your body stays in fat-burning mode. Want an alternative? Opt for a cup of low-fat yoghurt, a stick of biltong, or multitask with a handful of almonds.

THE PROBLEM You can't lift as much weight

As testosterone levels start to drop, it takes longer for your muscles to return to full strength after each workout.

THE FIX Eat broccoli and peppers. Together, they're packed with vitamins C and E, two nutrients that fight free radicals – rogue molecules that slow the repair of exercise-induced muscle damage, impeding recovery. Try this meal. It's infused with the most effective ingredients for speeding muscle recovery after a hard workout – vitamins C and E, high-quality protein and slow-digesting carbohydrates. In a deep saucepan, sauté 1 tablespoon of chopped onion, a quarter of a red pepper (cut into long, thin strips) and a pinch of black pepper on medium heat for 2 minutes. Next, add 225 grams of chicken-breast strips and 1 teaspoon of sage. Brown the chicken for 2 minutes, then add 1 cup of chicken stock and 1 cup of broccoli florets. Bring to a boil for 1 minute, then stir in ½ cup of plain, uncooked couscous. Cover the pan, remove it from the heat and let it sit for 5 to 10 minutes before serving.

THE PROBLEM Every lunch is a business lunch

Dining out usually means restaurant mega-portions – leading to a mega-gut.

THE FIX Trade that grilled-chicken sandwich for a grilled-chicken salad. UK researchers found that men who ate a low-

glycaemic lunch – one without bread, rice or pasta – burned more fat for three hours after eating than those who ate a high-glycaemic meal, even though both groups consumed the same number of kilojoules. More smart choices: chicken stir-fry, fajitas sans the tortillas or even a small steak with a side salad or steamed vegetables.

YOUR 40s THE FIGHT-DISEASE DECADE

Baldness, wrinkles and back hair are among the least of your worries; your body may be a walking time bomb. That's because about 3% of men in their 40s have asymptomatic prostate cancer, according to research from the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute. That is, the cancer is there but nearly undetectable. It's a terrifying prospect, but a reality in your 40s, which might be labelled "the decade of disease".

The reason: until age 44, accidents are the most likely cause of death in men. But once you reach 45, heart disease becomes your number one threat, killing millions of men every year. What's more, scientists at the University of California at Irvine discovered that men over 40 were up to twice as likely to develop melanomas than were women of the same age. There's also an elevated risk of non-fatal diseases, such as macular degeneration, which is a leading cause of blindness. And don't forget about obesity: even if you managed to sidestep it in your 30s, keeping your waistline in check doesn't become easier with age. **The solution?** A pre-emptive attack on your body's natural enemies. Your weapons: a knife and fork.

THE PROBLEM A fat expense account

Eating on the company is a fast way to inflate your gut.

THE FIX Adopt a point system. Assign these values to all menu items: two points for a salad; three points for an appetiser; two points for a starter; four points for a dessert; and two points for an alcoholic beverage. Order whatever you want, but limit yourself to a total of six points. To follow this system, choose from a category only once.

THE PROBLEM Cancer-prone skin

Mutating moles are scary, but food can help: researchers at the National Cancer Institute determined that people with the highest intakes of carotenoids – pigments that occur naturally in plants – were as much as six times less likely to develop

skin cancer than those with the lowest intakes. "Beta-carotene is an internal sun protector," says Dr Regina Goralczyk. That's because the vitamin plants itself in your skin, where its imperceptible orange and yellow pigments help deflect sunlight.

THE FIX Eat two orange sweet potatoes every week. This will provide you with the same amount of weekly beta-carotene as in men who demonstrated the lowest skin-cancer risk. Other top sources are carrots and spanspek.

THE PROBLEM Shrinking muscles

The average guy loses three kilograms of muscle by the time he reaches 50. But, in addition to lifting weights, you can protect your hard-earned muscles by feeding them a steady supply of high quality protein.

THE FIX Tuna. Gram for gram, it's one of the best sources of protein – and contains zero saturated fat. To braai your way to a better body, follow this muscle-building recipe. Brush a 180-gram tuna steak with olive oil, lightly season it with freshly ground pepper and place it on a hot braai. Grill until medium-rare to medium, for seven to 10 minutes on each side. Meanwhile, mix 3 tablespoons of peanut butter, 1 tablespoon of lemon juice, 1 tablespoon of balsamic vinegar, 1 teaspoon of brown sugar and 2 tablespoons of water in a bowl, and microwave the ingredients for 30 seconds. When the tuna is ready to eat, drizzle a small amount of the warm sauce on top. For a perfect complement, pair the tuna with ½ cup of wild rice.

THE PROBLEM You're a workaholic

Don't let long days at your desk undermine your healthy eating habits.

THE FIX Order an inexpensive bar fridge and have it delivered directly to your office. Stock it with food you won't be ashamed to carry into a meeting: milk; fruit; a few pieces of chicken breast; and a couple of in-case-of emergency microwave meals.

THE PROBLEM Elevated risk of prostate cancer

Sex probably won't kill you, but your sex gland can. Fortunately, Harvard researchers found that men with the highest levels of selenium had a 48% lower incidence of advanced prostate cancer than those with the lowest intakes.

THE FIX Eat three Brazil nuts every day. That'll provide you with 200 mcg of selenium, the exact amount you need to keep your prostate-cancer risk at rock-bottom levels. Mushrooms help, too: a half cup of the cooked fungi – specifically, brown and Portobello – contains more than 35 mcg, or nearly 20% of the amount you need daily. Other good sources of selenium include garlic, raisins and fish.

THE PROBLEM Worsening vision

You were first warned about going blind as a teen; this time, the threat is real. Thankfully, the National Institutes of Health found that people who consume the most lutein – a carotenoid found in plant foods – are 43% less likely to develop macular degeneration. Lutein helps filter blue light, preventing it from damaging retinal tissues.

THE FIX Eat two servings of greens each day. Consider one serving to be ½ cup of cooked spinach, broccoli or Brussels sprouts. Even better, swap in a serving of kale, which contains seven times more lutein than spinach.

THE PROBLEM Narrowing arteries

High cholesterol is a killer.

THE FIX Grab a handful of grapes every day. Antioxidants in the skin of red grapes have been linked to lowering LDL cholesterol and preventing clogged arteries. Bonus: compounds in the grapes may also slow the signs of ageing. Or try sipping a daily glass of red wine. In a Spanish study, scientists found that red wine reduced markers of arterial inflammation by 21%. Plus, alcohol thins your blood, just as a daily aspirin does.

THE PERFECT DAY OF EATING

Our all-star panel creates the ultimate health-boosting menu

BREAKFAST

The ideal breakfast is high in protein (to keep you satiated) and packed with fibre-rich vegetables and wholegrains (to prevent swings in blood sugar).

EAT Scrambled Eggs and Spinach (scramble 1 egg, 2 egg whites and ½ cup baby spinach in 1 tbsp olive oil; dust with chilli flakes), ¾ cup oats with ¼ cup walnuts and 2 tbsp açai pulp (available at Wellness Warehouse), green tea

WHY The eggs provide high-quality, slow-burning protein plus brain-boosting choline. Cooking them with heart-healthy olive oil and adding baby spinach, which is high in vitamin A and folate, bolsters eyesight and immune function. The chilli flakes reduce inflammation and can help fight prostate cancer. The oats-achai combo provides heart-healthy fibre (i.e. slow-burning energy), more high-quality protein (10 grams per ½ cup) and an antioxidant punch from the tart berries. Green tea provides a gentle, sustained neural buzz, prevents cancer and lowers blood pressure.

2 148 kJ, 22g protein, 34g carbohydrates (5g fibre), 33g fat (only 6g saturated)

SNACK 1

Stomp mid-morning cravings with a high-quality protein, such as that found in yoghurt. The more protein you eat early on, the longer you'll feel full throughout the day.

EAT Fat-free Greek yoghurt (180g), ½ cup blueberries, 1 tbsp ground flax

WHY Consider this combo a velvety speedball of muscle-powering protein (Greek yoghurt has more protein than the regular kind), heart-healthy fats (flax is high in alpha linolenic omega-3s) and disease-fighting antioxidants (a serving of blueberries delivers an average of 6 552 mol/TE of antioxidants). Plus, the probiotics in the yoghurt boost the immune system.

827kJ, 21g protein, 21g carbohydrates (5g fibre), 4g fat (0.4g saturated, 1g monounsaturated, 3g polyunsaturated)

LUNCH

Aim for at least three servings of vegetables complemented by quality proteins, healthy fats and complex carbs. Since vegetables are mainly water, fibre and antioxidants, they'll keep you hydrated and full of healthy kilojoules.

EAT Side Salad (combine 2 cups red leaf lettuce, ¼ cup shiitake mushrooms, ¼ cup yellow peppers and ¼ cup broccoli; dress with 1 tsp olive oil and 2 to 3 tbsp vinegar), Bean Sandwich (top ½ cup mashed beans with 5 sliced olives, a handful each of spring onions and sprouts, 2 tomato slices and lettuce; serve on 100% wholewheat bread) and a red apple

WHY Research shows that starting your lunch with a salad helps slow digestion so that you don't overeat. This combination of vegetables provides cancer-fighting antioxidants, bone-mass-boosting vitamin K, cholesterol-lowering selenium, free-radical-fighting vitamin C and blood-pressure-lowering potassium. The bean dip is loaded with mood-boosting fibre and heart-healthy fats. Ending your meal with an apple provides inflammation-fighting quercetin and refreshes your mouth.

2 34kJ, 15g protein, 69g carbohydrates (15g fibre), 28g fat (5g saturated, 19g monounsaturated, 4g polyunsaturated)

SNACK 3

Satisfy the munchies and glide towards sleep.

EAT 1 medium banana

WHY Bananas contain melatonin, a natural sleep-regulating hormone. Plus, the potassium in the banana may help lower blood pressure.

744kJ, 7g protein, 36g carbohydrates (3g fibre), 1g fat (1g saturated, 0g monounsaturated, 0g polyunsaturated)

DINNER

Dinner should be light in kilojoules and heavy in nutrients. Eating too much at dinner can ignite your appetite and cause you to overeat late at night, setting you up for dangerous weight gain and uncontrolled hunger.

EAT Power Slaw (combine ½ cup shredded carrots, ½ cup red cabbage and ½ cup kale; dress with 1 tsp olive oil and 2 to 3 tbsp vinegar), Prawn Stir-fry (stir-fry 85g prawns and 1 cup bok choy in 1 tsp olive oil; dust with turmeric and chilli flakes; serve with ¼ cup brown rice and a handful of cashews); and ¾ cup fruit salad (kiwi, pineapple, orange and plums, with a twist of lime juice and pinch of freshly grated ginger). A glass of cabernet sauvignon is optional.

WHY Starting your dinner with low-kilojoule, high-fibre vegetables will decrease your overall food intake by 12%. This mix provides macular-degeneration-fighting beta-carotene, cancer-preventing lutein and eyesight-boosting vitamin A. The prawns provide 17 grams of lean protein, plus heart-healthy omega-3s, while the bok choy is rich in bone-building calcium, as well as folic acid, iron and immune-boosting vitamins A and C. The brown rice adds fibre, which helps stave off late-night cravings. Finally, the fruit salad is more than a sweet dessert. It's anti-inflammatory (thanks to the bromelain in the pineapple and vitamin C in the orange) and bone strengthening (thanks to the potassium in the kiwi). The ginger adds a cancer-fighting piquant top note and the cabernet sauvignon provides quaffable antioxidants.

2 052kJ, 31g protein, 58g carbohydrates (9g fibre), 18g fat (3g saturated, 10g monounsaturated, 5g polyunsaturated)

SNACK 2

Lunch typically wears off in three to five hours, yet most guys go six to seven hours between lunch and dinner and often succumb to cravings.

EAT 8 almonds and a handful of red grapes

WHY With six grams of protein and three grams of fibre, almonds provide a steady flow of energy. The grapes add a zesty anti-ageing antioxidant burst.

866kJ, 7g protein, 15g carbohydrates (4g fibre), 15g fat (1g saturated, 10g monounsaturated, 4g polyunsaturated)

How Men Should Eat

CONFUSED BY ALL THE NEW DIETS ON THE MARKET?
WE CONSULTED THE EXPERTS TO FIND THE BEST MEAL PLAN
FOR THE AVERAGE GUY – YOU

BY IAN MCNAUGHT DAVIS

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or 59 years we've been brainwashed by governments, by industries, by NGOs and experts who believe that a diet that's killing us is actually good for us," shouted the man into a microphone, gesticulating in front of a lecture hall filled with neatly groomed doctors and scribbling scientists. "The evidence is all around us, but for some reason we can't see it!"

The ancestors of the people in this room believed for several millennia that they lived on a flat planet. Then, around 300BC Plato surmised we didn't. (Although it took years of sailing seas – that were allegedly cordoned off by fixed horizons with a fear that we might fall off the edge of the planet – until Christopher Columbus proved Plato's theory in 1492.) Some 355 years later, an Austrian doctor named Ignaaz Semmelweis suggested the radical notion of washing hands when delivering babies, sending infant mortality rates plummeting from 35% to 1%. In the 1960s, cigarettes were conversation-starters with a mild buzz and adverts reminded us that they kept doctors going through long hours in the ER. Now you can't light up in any public place in South Africa. And that's the basis of scientific progress: everything is okay until it's been proven that it isn't.



The man behind the microphone is Professor Tim Noakes. If you didn't know him a year ago, you do now. Thanks to the diet he promotes, he's achieved heretic status amongst an overwhelmingly large medical fraternity. Many of whom are sitting in front of him in the lecture hall at the University of Cape Town, where he is challenging Dr Jacques E. Rossouw, who is representing America's National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, at an academic debate on the severity of cholesterol.

The academic discussion concludes, but the debate continues. Noakes remains smilingly steadfast with his opinions while most dietitians would gladly eat him in a low-GI wrap. But while scientists bicker, the waistlines of South African males are expanding by the minute. The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) established the South African National Health And Nutrition Examination Survey (SAHNES) that examined a cross-section of the country. Their latest results are grim. A step-fitness test found almost a third of South African males are classified as physically unfit.

"I looked at deaths from cardiovascular diseases in the BRICS countries and it's only Russia that's worse than us," says Dr Craig Nossel of Discovery Vitality.

South Africa is not only fat; it's also delusional. Despite the fact that obesity has risen and waist circumferences have expanded since the South African Demographic and Health Survey conducted in 2003, two-thirds of South African men believe they eat and drink healthily and that there is no need for them to make changes in their diet.

WHY DIETS DON'T WORK

Perhaps you've tried the Noakes diet, as I did upon hearing I would have to eat bacon every morning. Perhaps you realised you couldn't maintain it, as I did, because you missed sandwiches and ordering off the same menu as the person you're having dinner with. Maybe you were one of 8% of South African males, according to SAHNES, who attempted to lose weight in the past year. And, perhaps, when you step onto a scale, you don't see the result that infomercials promised you would. These statistics that speak of a country of swelling bellies con-

firm what nutrition and dietetics consultants and past president of the Association for Dietetics in South Africa, Megan Pentz-Kluyts, maintain about fad diets: they don't work.

Word of mouth is a weight loss diet's principal advertiser. People prefer anecdotes to empiricism. Weight loss diets are often whatever the flavour of the month is, says Pentz-Kluyts. "You tend to follow a diet if you see or hear from someone close to you who has gained muscle mass or lost weight."

A lot of these diets are built on anecdotes and that's the principle criticism of Noakes's diet. "I'm not going to touch on anecdotes, anthropology or agricultural policy," said Rossouw, wryly, in opposition to Noakes's colourful explanation of our collective slide to obesity. "I will focus on controlled clinical trials which offer the best evidence."

A big problem with diets, explains Pentz-Kluyts, is that they take food groups out and earmark them as "bad".

"The downside of a fad is that it can't always give you the nutrients you require while you're looking at weight loss."

If you follow diets verbatim, you'll lose weight, says Pentz-Kluyts. But you might also experience side effects that aren't as easily noticeable as tumbling figures on a scale. "Many people don't really mind, because they're getting the results they need. But you have to realise the moment you start excluding food that you're not necessarily going to see long-term compliance."

IN DEFENCE OF CARBS

While these diets have been pushing protein, they've given carbs a bad name, says Pentz-Kluyts. "Good carbs and bad carbs have been lumped together. While refined carbs may not be that healthy, wholegrains are among the healthiest foods." Refined carbohydrates have had their fibre stripped away, she says, citing white bread, pies, cakes, biscuits and sweets as examples. "But wholegrains have a lower glycaemic index and release sugars slowly, meaning that the blood sugar is easily absorbed by our cells and converted into energy." Examples of these are brown rice, oats, wholegrain cereals, millet, barley, quinoa and legumes.

DEBUNKING THE DIETS

Why these diets may help you now but not later

THE PALEO DIET

It's surprising that we want to go to the eating habits of an era where we only lived to around 30 years old, says Megan Pentz-Kluyts, registered dietitian. "Why would you want to go back there?" However, what the paleo diet does get right is its aversion to processed meat. "They are looking at fresh fruit and vegetables, and moving away from refined stuff, so that is a good thing because we need to move away from our regular intake of processed food."

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

The Mediterranean diet ticks several boxes. "It punts monounsaturated fats with things like olive oil, olives, avocados and even canola oil. Those are good oils and good fats." It's also more varied than most diets. "At least they tend to have a little bit of everything, and it's proven to have beneficial effects on health long-term." Pentz-Kluyts points out that in South Africa we have don't have the plentiful resources of olive oil that extend the life expectancies of those in the Mediterranean. "There's sunflower oil or a move to polyunsaturated fats and obviously a worldwide skewing of omega-6 and omega-3."

THE NOAKES DIET

Though often touted as a high protein diet, there's a bigger emphasis on fats. "Fats are not necessarily a bad thing," says Pentz-Kluyts, but having such a small menu makes it a difficult diet to maintain. High protein diets may contain preservatives in processing the food, such as smoked chicken or biltong.

THE VEGETARIAN DIET

Most places cater for vegetarians, and "you can get most of the nutrients you need if people are clever about it," says Pentz-Kluyts. "If you're a lacto vegetarian or an ovo-lacto vegetarian, you can get enough protein in eggs and dairy." Not everyone gets it right though. "The vegetarian diet is often misconstrued as a lot of white sauce on pasta with vegetables mixed in, and obviously that's not a healthy option. If you go vegan (no animal products at all), it's a little bit more tricky to get iron, calcium and vitamin B12."

THE ATKINS DIET

"It's not a good long-term eating plan, so it's not a healthy approach to food. Many of these so-called high protein sources have a high content of saturated fat, and you need to look at the portion size throughout," says Pentz-Kluyts. Watch out for the high salt content too, she adds.

There are side effects of a fad diet that go beyond simply getting tired of eating skinless chicken every day. When carbs get cut, the fibre goes too, says Pentz-Kluyts. "When we say 'carbs', people don't realise that vegetables contain carbs. We're not talking starchy vegetables; we're talking vegetables and fruit. These have other nutrients that we need in our intestines. We've got the prebiotics that help to produce more probiotics.

NUTRITION MYTHS: BUSTED!

Eat like this, not like that

MYTH: FRUIT JUICE IS BETTER THAN FIZZY DRINKS.

100ml of 100% fruit juice blend amounts to 187kJ, while 100ml of Coke contains 180kJ. Coke contains less kilojoules than fruit juice. "There's a direct link between obesity and your intake of liquid kilojoules," warns Megan Pentz-Kluyts, registered dietitian. "People move from fizzy drinks to juice, thinking fruit juice isn't as bad." It is.

VERDICT: Certain softdrinks can be the less sugary option.

MYTH: ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS ARE A BETTER OPTION THAN SUGAR.

Artificial sweeteners are generally low in kilojoules, but are often derived from an unnatural source, explains Lila Bruk, a dietitian in Joburg. "These products have not been around long enough to have been fully tested over enough years to really know the long-term health effects of their use." Artificial sweeteners also often cause carb cravings and can cause problems

like bloating or diarrhoea.

"Sweeteners don't get you used to less sweet tastes, so your sugar cravings continue," she adds.

VERDICT: Rather use a little sugar or honey, Bruk advises. "Or, even better, get used to using nothing at all."

MYTH: POPCORN IS HEALTHIER THAN CHIPS.

A bag of salted crisps yields 2 240kJ per 100g, while popcorn with real butter notches up 2 510kJ in the same amount. "Always check the

Any plant food can potentially increase good bacteria in your gut, which improves not only your immune system but your digestive system. This gets taken away very often when you've got a high-protein, low-carb diet."

Eliminating foods alters the pH of a body, she adds. "A high protein diet is acidic and acidity leads to inflammation. Heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes are linked to inflammation."

"If you cut out carbs, you'll only feel fatigued and find it difficult to sustain your energy levels," says Lila Bruk of

Lila Bruk & Associates consulting dieticians in Joburg. "Weight loss that comes from cutting carbs – and is usually mainly water rather than fat – comes back when you start eating carbs again."

Pentz-Kluyts mentions that sometimes it's not what's in the food but how it's prepared. This is where the humble potato gets a bad rap. Potatoes are often overcooked and buttered, or made into mash which often means a larger portion. Sweet potato (potato's nutritious cousin) can also be destructive if it's drizzled in honey or slathered with butter.

► WHY MEAL PLANS ARE BETTER

You might be on a fad diet without knowing it. Pentz-Kluyts advises you ask yourself: am I eating regularly? And: is every food group in here? If you can't say "yes" to both of them, then it's time to upgrade the way you eat. A researched meal plan will bring variety to your plate that you won't get from a diet. You'll get the nutrients you've been missing out on, won't suffer from taste fatigue, and a good meal plan promises more compliance than other fad diets. Learn these seven nutrition secrets and eat your way to a healthier, stronger version of you:

1. MIX IT UP

According to SAHNES, two out of five South African men consume a diet low in dietary diversity. "You want to bring in variety with different food groups because they offer different things," says Pentz-Kluyts. "The moment you combine carbs and protein, you slow digestion down which lowers blood sugar levels and your insulin production, which helps to keep you fuller for longer." Mixing carbs and protein keeps you slimmer too. "Insulin is a stress hormone and it deposits fat particularly around girth."

2. KEEP YOUR TANK FULL

"A meal plan is not just about eating the right foods, it's eating throughout the day. We're looking at three to five meals to up energy and support the body on a day-to-day basis," says Pentz-Kluyts. "More studies are showing that if you eat throughout the day it helps with antioxidant protection and lowering free radical production – good

in terms of long-term health and reducing inflammation."

3. DISH UP PROPERLY

You've got to get the amounts on your plate right. "Volume plays a role in a healthy diet. If you're eating all the different food groups, you should feel quite satiated after a meal or a snack."

4. PREPARE LIKE A PRO

"Become aware of how you cook," she advises. How a meal is made makes a big difference. If it's simply prepared – like grilling and steaming – and you've added minimal fats and oils, then you'll have a better product.

5. LIVE BETTER, LIVE LONGER

What's on (or what's not on) your plate doesn't guarantee instant health. "A diet never stands alone; it does stand together with a healthy lifestyle, regular exercise, regular eating patterns and a sufficient amount of amount of sleep."

6. SPLURGE (OCCASIONALLY)

Convenience shops make life easier when you're too busy to cook or can't be bothered to go grocery shopping. Or sometimes they have just have such damn tasty meals. It's fine to have these things occasionally, but not on a daily basis, Pentz-Kluyts says.

7. LEARN YOUR LABELS

Do you buy your own food? Well, you're in the minority. According to the SAHNES, 55% of South Africans don't do their own grocery shopping. And out of the ones that do, only 7.3% choose their food based on health reasons. We're looking at the fats and carbs on labels, but we're not looking at food totality. People are looking at carbohydrates, but not at total sugar, Pentz-Kluyts points out. "Be aware of how much total sugar is intrinsically in that food, together with food that is added." Watch out for ingredients that end in "-ose", they tend to have a high "added sugar" content.

label to make a better choice," Pentz-Kluyts advises.

VERDICT: Chips can contain less fat than popcorn.

MYTH: BROWN BREAD IS BETTER THAN WHITE.

"Brown bread is made from unbleached white flour, and has an equally high-GI and low-fibre content as white bread," explains Bruk. "Your best bet is a seed bread or pure rye bread – both have a low GI."

VERDICT: Both are equal offenders.

MYTH: LOW-FAT CREAM CHEESE IS HEALTHIER THAN CREAMED COTTAGE CHEESE.

"Low-fat is not always lower in energy," say Pentz-Kluyts. The proof is in the cheese: creamed cottage cheese has 775kJ per 100g with a reading of 15.8g total fat, while low-fat cream cheese measured 958kJ per 100g and a total fat reading of 19.8g.

VERDICT: Creamed cottage cheese contains less fat than the low-fat cream cheese option.

MYTH: ENERGY DRINKS ARE A NECESSITY AFTER EXERCISE.

Generally, one has enough carbohydrate or glycogen stores in the body to fuel up to 90 minutes of continuous exercise, Bruk says. You need to replenish your glycogen stores to continue to exercise at the same level. "Therefore, a sports or energy drink is actually only necessity after you've done at least 90 minutes of exercise." Water is sufficient for anything less, she says.

VERDICT: Only after the 90-minute mark.

MYTH: BUTTER IS BETTER THAN MARGARINE.

It depends on the margarine, says Bruk. Trans fats are unhealthy fats that form during processing and give margarine its solid form, but are very bad for heart health and cancer risk, she explains. Butter may be "natural", but is also extremely high in saturated fat and can be detrimental to your cholesterol levels.

VERDICT: Some margarines are more equal than others. Go for the tub marked "trans fat-free".

YOUR SHOPPING LIST, UPGRADED

HERE'S WHAT YOU SHOULD BE PACKING

Recreate your shopping list under six key groups of food rather than listing foodstuffs by item name, advises *Men's Health* nutritional expert Megan Pentz-Kluyts. This will ensure that you quickly develop an awareness of what constitutes a balanced diet.

Group 1: Starchy foods (HIGH IN CARBOHYDRATES):

These foods should be a part of every meal and snack and should make up a large proportion of your trolley.

- Wholegrain bread
- Wholewheat pasta, such as durum wheat pasta
- Wholegrain biscuits
- Long grain rice (white or brown), like basmati
- Potatoes
- Pumpkin or butternut
- Peas
- Mielies
- Maize meal

Group 2: Fruits and vegetables

Five servings of fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables should be eaten every day, so these should also make up a large proportion of your trolley.

- Fresh fruit
- Dried fruit (any, but in smaller portions)
- Fresh or frozen vegetables
- Fresh fruit juice (100% pure or unsweetened)

i Preferably select fresh fruits and vegetables that are grown locally and in season, advises Pentz-Kluyts. One fruit serving can be replaced with one serving of 100% pure unsweetened fruit juice (200ml). When cooking these, choose methods that preserve the nutritional value, like steaming, baking or microwaving with a little water.

Group 3: Chicken, meat, milk, fish and eggs

(RICH IN PROTEIN):

Protein should be included in every meal or snack, in smaller amounts than starchy foods and fruit and vegetables. A serving is usually the size of the palm of your hand and the same thickness as your hand. One should try to include fish twice a week, skinless chicken two or three times a week and lean red meat two or three times a week.

- Oily fish varieties (salmon, trout, pilchards or sardines)
- Chicken breasts (skinless)
- Lean beef (beef stroganoff, mince meat, steaks or schnitzel without any visible fat)
- Ostrich meat
- Milk (low-fat or fat-free varieties)
- Yoghurt (low-fat or fat-free varieties)
- Cheese, unprocessed varieties. (Low and medium fat; soft and hard cheeses like cottage cheese, ricotta, feta, Mozzarella and Edam)
- Eggs (If you are free of any cholesterol problems, you can include an egg a day as a replacement for meat/chicken/fish in a meal.)

Group 4: Legumes and soy products

Try to include either dried or tinned versions of these in dishes at least once or twice a week. They are low in fat, provide fibre, are a source of plant protein and, best of all, they're economical. Aim for at least one vegetarian main meal per week.

- Dried / split peas
- Chickpeas
- Beans, such as kidney, sugar and baked beans
- Lentils
- Soya, such as tofu

Group 5: Fats and oils

Buy extra-virgin olive oil to use sparingly as a salad dressing as opposed to cooking with it. Should you need to "flash fry" foods, use cooking spray or, as the Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa suggests, canola oil. Invest in a good non-stick frying pan and use a moderate heat setting to prevent sticking. This way you'll need very little additional fats and oils when cooking.

Good fats to include are:

- Mixed nuts and seeds
- Avocados
- Vegetable oils, such as grapeseed, olive, canola, sesame and sunflower oils

i Check the fat levels in sauces that you buy for pastas or other dishes. Cream-based sauces tend to be quite high in fat, so rather choose tomato-based ones.

THE 6 RULES TO PROPER EATING

1. Eat five to six times per day: breakfast, snack, lunch, snack, dinner, optional snack (every 2.5 to three hours).
2. Pack snacks into zip-lock bags once a week and keep in the fridge for easy access and availability.
3. Sit and eat with minimal or no distractions and eat slowly.
4. Don't eat in front of the TV, computer or in the car.
5. Aim to drink eight glasses of water and/or rooibos tea per day.
6. Foods such as sweets, soft drinks and syrup are high in sugar and should be used sparingly and only for exercise lasting longer than 90 minutes.

THE ULTIMATE EATING PLAN

- DAILY ALLOWANCE: 1 CUP/250ML LOW-FAT MILK FOR TEA/COFFEE/TO DRINK OR AN ADDITIONAL YOGHURT.
 → WATER: AIM TO DRINK AT LEAST 8 GLASSES OF WATER PER DAY. → TSP: TEASPOON(S), TBSP: TABLESPOON(S)

	BREAKFAST	MORNING SNACK	LUNCH	AFTERNOON SNACK	DINNER
DAY 1	1 cup low-fat milk 1 cup oat bran, cooked 1 medium banana, sliced 1 tbsp mixed nuts, raw	100ml yoghurt 6 litchis	2 slices low-GI / rye bread 120g chicken, skinless 2 tsp low-fat dressing/ mayonnaise 1 cup home-made vegetable soup	3 Provitas 2 tsp peanut butter, sugar- and salt-free 30g ostrich biltong 1 cup grapes	180g lean mince 1½ cups spaghetti, cooked ½ cup tomato-based sauce ½ cup green beans and carrots 2 tsp canola oil
DAY 2	1 cup low-fat milk ¾ cup low-GI muesli 2 tsp raisins 1 tbsp mixed nuts, raw	3 Provitas 30g cheese, grated ½ avocado 2 kiwis	4 Ryevitas 120g beef, chopped 2 tsp roasted red pepper pesto 1 cup cherry tomatoes	100ml yoghurt 1 Woolworths Seasonal Mix Dried Fruit Bar 18g	240g fish, grilled 1½ cups sweet potato 1 cup stir-fry vegetables 2 tsp canola oil
DAY 3	1 cup low-fat milk 1 cup high-fibre bran 1 cup strawberries 1 tbsp mixed nuts, raw	100ml yoghurt 1 medium apple	2 slices low-GI bread 125g wafer-thin beef pastrami 4 tsp low-fat sweet chilli cream cheese 1 cup tomato and cucumber, sliced	1 slice low-GI brown bread / rye / seed loaf 2 tsp hummus 1 medium pear	180g skinless chicken breast, grilled 1½ cups brown rice ½ cup tomato-based sauce (made with 2 tsp canola oil) ½ cup mange tout, steamed
DAY 4	2 slices low-GI brown bread / rye / seed loaf 1 egg, poached 2 tsp roasted red pepper pesto 100ml unsweetened fruit juice	2 Ryevitas 1 tbsp roasted pepper hummus 30g lean biltong/ snapsticks 1 guava	6 Provitas 160g tuna, in brine or water 2 tsp low-fat mayonnaise 1 cup home-made vegetable soup	1 cup low-fat chocolate milk 2 plums	180g ostrich strips 1½ cups pasta screws, cooked 1 cup mushrooms, red onions, red/green peppers, cooked 2 tsp canola oil
DAY 5	2 bran muffins 1½ tbsp mozzarella, grated 2 tsp peanut butter 1 medium banana	100ml yoghurt 3 dates	2 slices low-GI / rye bread 2 eggs, boiled 1 cup baked beans ½ avocado 1 cup tomatoes and mushrooms, grilled	½ cup popcorn (air-popped, no added fat) 30g lean biltong 1 tbsp mixed nuts, raw 2 tsp raisins	180g lean chicken cubes 1½ cups potato mash (use milk from daily allowance) 1 tsp butter 2 cups mixed vegetable salad 2 tsp low-oil salad dressing
DAY 6	1 cup low-fat milk ¼ cup wholewheat ProNutro 1 medium apple 1 tbsp mixed nuts, raw	2 Ryevitas ¼ cup cottage cheese ¼ avocado 2 plums	120g beef patty, grilled ½ avocado 1 cup sliced tomato, onion, cucumber and green/red peppers	100ml yoghurt 8 apricot halves, dried	180g lean beef fillet 1 large mielie ½ cup butternut 1 cup broccoli and cauliflower, cooked 2 tsp butter or margarine
DAY 7	1 cup low-fat milk 2 Weetbix 1 cup mixed berries 1 tbsp mixed nuts, raw	Smoothie: 180g frozen berries ½ cup low-fat milk ½ cup yoghurt	1 pita bread Filling: 60g cheese, medium fat, eg. Mozzarella, grated 2 eggs, boiled and chopped ½ avocado 1 cup mixed salad vegetables, chopped	3 Provitas 30g cheese, grated ½ avocado 1 medium apple	240g fish, baked 1 cups brown rice ½ cup lentils ½ cup tomato and onion mix 1 cup mixed salad 2 tsp canola or olive oil

You Lose You Win

THE BELLY OFF! READERS' CHALLENGE FINALISTS SHED MORE THAN
100KG BETWEEN THEM. THESE ARE THE TOP 10 WINNERS
AND THEIR AMAZING WEIGHT LOSS SECRETS

BY IAN MCNAUGHT DAVIS
PHOTOGRAPHS IGOR POLZENHAGEN

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osing weight is one thing, staying lean is another. The men on these pages did both... and they did it through sweat and sacrifice.

This year's *Men's Health Belly Off! Readers' Challenge* ran over 12 weeks, with 2 449 guys entering the race to reveal their fittest, healthiest self.

Twelve weeks (and more than 215 000 votes) later, and with each entrant weighing in at an average of 4.7kg lighter, we were able to whittle the list down to the top 10. These are the men you see on these pages. They lost a collective total of 130kg... but, as each of them learned, there's no shortcut to real weight loss. It's not simply about a deficit on a scale; it's about embracing and living a lifestyle of weight loss using expert nutritional and training advice.

That's why our judges picked Anru Nel from Pretoria as the *Men's Health 2013 Belly Off!* winner, in recognition of his massive transformation to a leaner, stronger, more confident version 2.0 of himself. Nel and nine other South African men proved that it's possible to better themselves, and they're continuing to strip away fat.

Think you could stand to lose a few kilos? It's time to wise up to these guys' tried-and-tested flab-attacking strategies.



A full-page background image showing two men in athletic wear performing a handstand on a pile of rubble. They are positioned in front of a chain-link fence. The man on the left is wearing a black and white sleeveless shirt and black shorts with a red stripe. The man on the right is wearing a dark grey t-shirt. Both are looking down at their hands on the ground.

NEL'S WINNING TIPS

1. BUILD GYM-FREE MUSCLE

"A lot of people use the fact that they can't go to a gym as an excuse," says Nel. "Get creative in your house with your gym programme."

2. EAT MORE, LOSE MORE

"I used to skip a lot of meals and I would end up going ballistic at night. But with this programme I was forced to eat more because I actually got hungry."

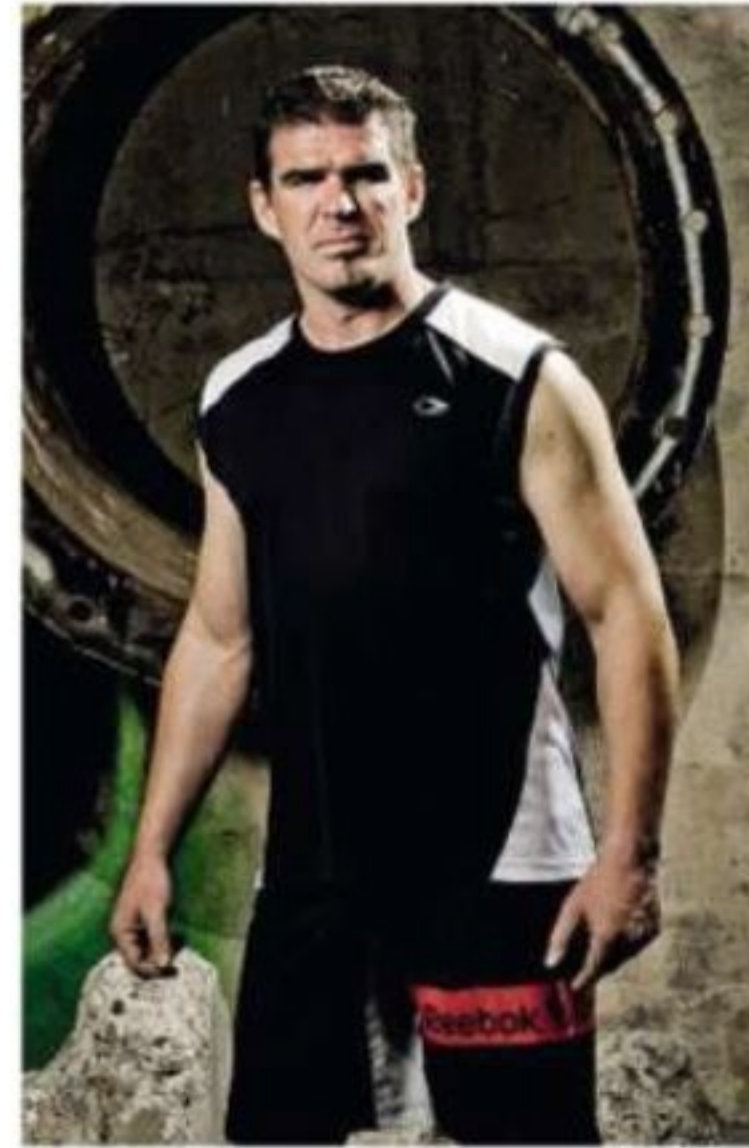
3. GO GREEN

"I tried to eat as many greens as as possible, like broccoli and spinach. I completely removed fat and the carbs I took were from things like salad dressing."

4. ELIMINATE LIQUID CARBS

Nel ditched the draughts for less carb-laden lite beers. "Because you can't watch rugby and not have a beer in your hand."

2013 BELLY OFF! READERS' CHALLENGE WINNER!



Weight
17kg

Waist
13cm

Chest
8cm



GET CREATIVE WITH YOUR HOME WORKOUTS

ANRU NEL, 33, PRETORIA, TEACHER

Nel had his fair share of challenges beyond losing a spare tyre. He suffers from asthma and also had to lose weight to undergo a back operation. He used to wake up in the morning with a feeling of numbness in his feet and legs.

"I went to see the doctor and I said, 'I can't do this any more.' The doctor told me for every kilo of weight that you carry, it puts three kilograms of strain on your back, and that's why my legs and feet were sore.

"I didn't have any drive to exercise. I moved into a bit of depression for a few months – I drank a whole lot of beer and ate anything I wanted."

Then he entered the *Belly Off! Readers' Challenge*. "My main motivation was to say that for every kilo I lose, that's three kilos of strain off my back."

Nel built his own gym – using dumbbells, a medicine ball and implements from his backyard. He filled a 5-litre oilcan with cement and turned it into a kettlebell. "I tried to do the exercises from *Men's Health*, just not using the normal conventions."

It worked. "I'm waking up with no pain in my feet. And at 33 there's still a lot to live for and I've got two little kids, so that's the motivation."



SPECIAL
MENTION

**LOST
17KG!**

SPECIAL
MENTION

**GOT A SIX-
PACK!**



Weight **15kg**
Waist **12cm**
Chest **2cm**



PULL-UPS ARE THE SILVER BULLET

GERHARD COMBRINK, 35,
RANDFONTEIN, HANDYMAN

The *Belly Off! Readers' Challenge* brought wholesale changes into Combrink's life. First, he quit smoking and drinking. Then he lost 12cm off his former beer boep. Now he's added MMA to his training routine and the kilograms of fat are continuing to evaporate.

After three months of committed exercise and a whole new mealplan, Combrink's quality of life has changed dramatically. "I feel really good and all my friends have noticed it," he says. "When you start losing weight, and you look at yourself in the mirror and you can see a difference – there's nothing better than that. I'm not going to stop."

COMBRINK'S WINNING TIPS

1. MIX IT UP

"I used *Men's Health* workouts, and I played around with the diets as well. The advice that I can give to readers is they must choose the exercises and diet that works for them."

2. PULLING POWER

Combrink's silver bullet is pull-ups. "They're harder than the other exercise but they make you stronger. The same with dips: I can see a big difference in my arms."

3. CUT CARBS

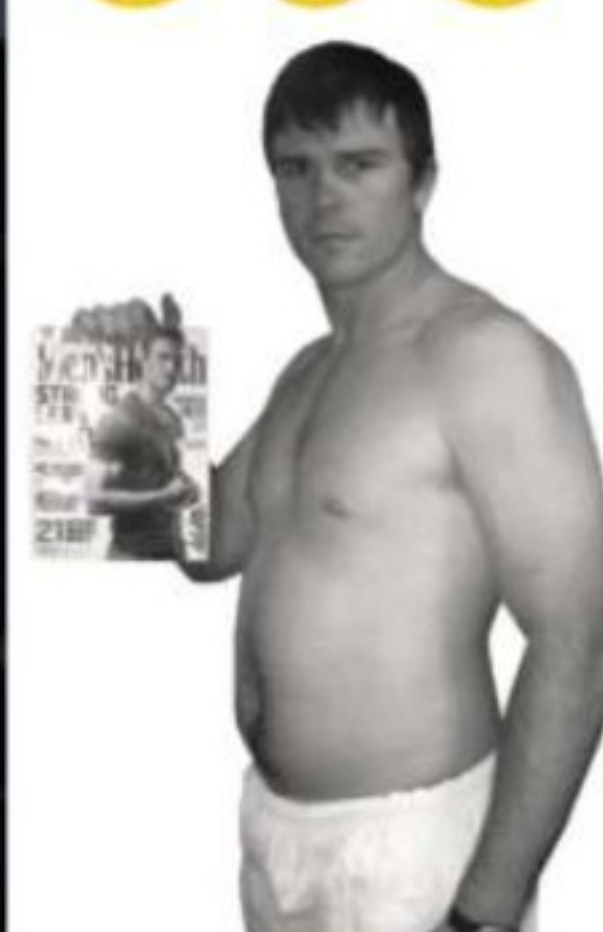
"I cut out carbohydrates like potatoes and rice, and swapped potatoes for sweet potatoes. I ate as many green vegetables – like spinach and broccoli – as I could."

4. BOOST YOUR RESISTANCE

Get some vitamins and minerals, Combrink advises. "Every time you get sick, you cut out two weeks of training and then you pick up weight again and it's difficult to come back, so you must make sure you don't get sick."



Weight **11kg**
Waist **18cm**
Chest **10cm**



MELT FAT ON YOUR BIKE

WH STANDER, 24, LAINGSBURG,
CONTRACT QUALITY INSPECTOR

In a matter of months, Stander went from being overweight to building his best body. He radically changed the way he ate and exercised – and it's changed the way he sees himself. "Now I feel like I look, and I'm looking the best I've ever looked, so I feel the best I've ever felt," he says.

Before he unearthed his six-pack, Stander had to find the motivation to lose the crucial centimetres. "A friend told me once, 'Even if you go to the gym and walk back, you have beaten the coach potato that you once were.'"

A healthy body gives you a healthy mind and it makes everything better. It's made me a healthier person and it makes me feel like a man – and a damn good one as well.

STANDER'S WINNING TIPS

1. MAN UP!

"My advice is just get off your ass and get started. Getting started is the hardest part but once you're in there and you see the first kilogram is lost, it's the best feeling ever. Do it. Your body deserves it."

2. GET PSYCHED

"My biggest motivation was wanting to be in the Top 10 so bad. That just gave me that extra push to work harder. Summer is coming and I want a better-looking body for the beach."

3. MORE MEALS, LESS FAT

"I was just living to eat. I ate chocolates, pasta and I only ate twice a day. Then I changed to eating to live – I ate six meals a day in smaller portions. Changing the eating plan was the hardest challenge but it was worth fighting for."

4. SHRED YOUR GUT

"You won't lose weight if you don't exercise. I did loads of cardio – running, swimming, cycling. Get out there and you'll clear your mind when you jog or cycle."



Weight **17kg**
Waist **17cm**
Chest **7cm**



FRY FAT WITH FARMER'S WALKS

DEVEN NAIDOO, 30, RICHARDS BAY, MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANT

"In the past, my focus was on and off," says Naidoo. "I would do things short-term where it would be more like a diet or one or two weeks of gym. It wasn't consistent. I would lose weight and then gain it back the next week. But in this challenge I had a purpose every day. It helped me focus and gave me a goal."

Naidoo reckons that although you need discipline, you shouldn't be too hard on yourself. Having a bad meal or losing a day of exercise isn't a tragedy. "I used to stress about it, but if I eat badly, it's only 10% of the whole week – so I concentrated on the positives more than the negatives."

NAIDOO'S WINNING TIPS

1. GET STRONGER, GET QUICKER

"I started off with one day cardio, one day strength training. I mainly used machines and when I lost enough weight and got comfortable, I started using free weights."

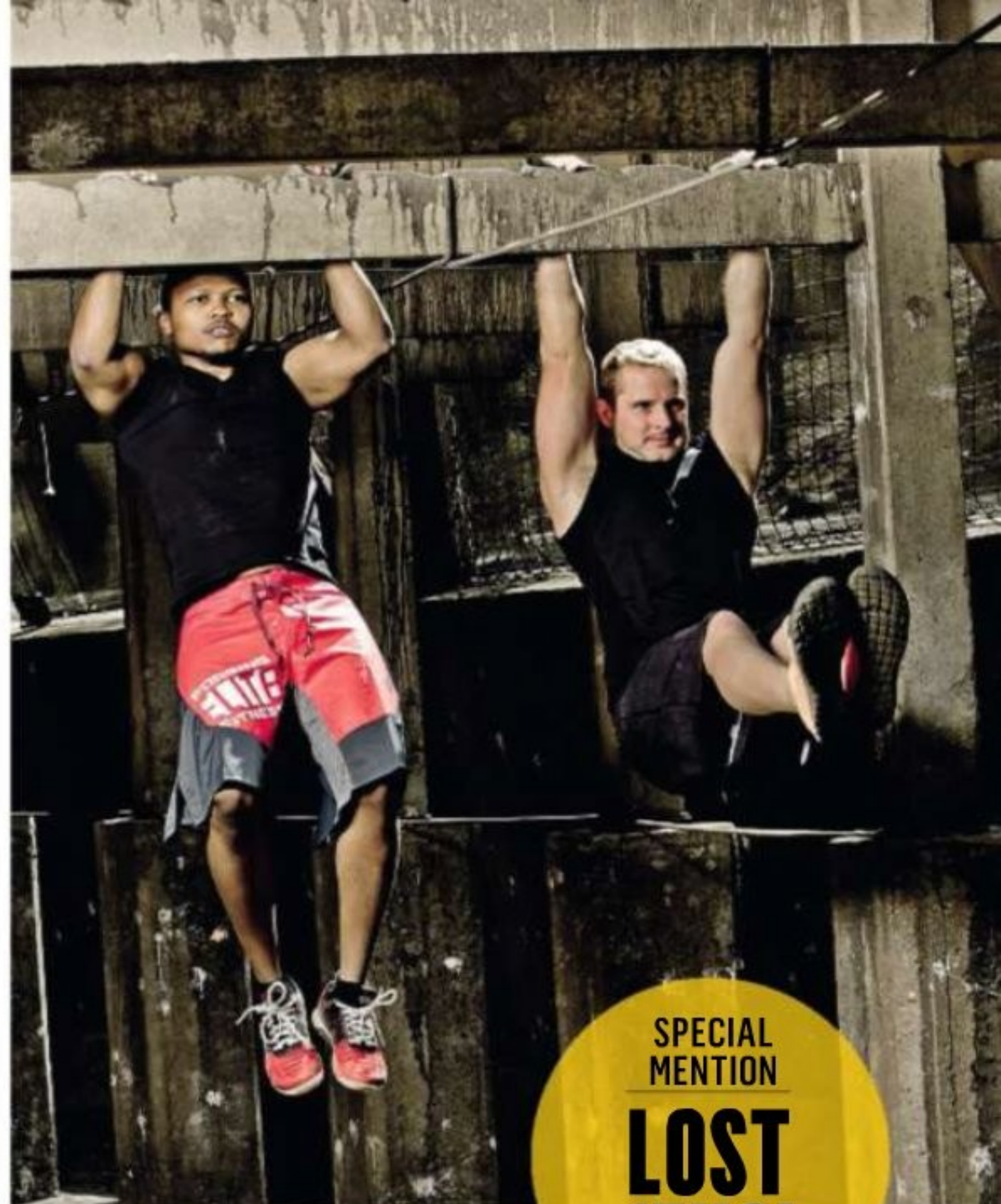
2. SHRED FAT AT SPEED

"I was doing a lot of super setting," says Naidoo. "I would just

run for 10 minutes, warm-up on the treadmill, then go on to the strength exercises." If the gym is full, adapt with push-ups and crunches, he advises.

3. SCULPT GUNS

"My favourite exercise is the farmer's walk where I walk and stop and do some push-ups. That's strengthened my triceps and my shoulders."



SPECIAL MENTION

LOST 17KG!





Weight **8kg**
Waist **8cm**
Chest **8cm**



SHRED YOUR BELLY WITH H.I.I.T

THSEKEDI RAMMUTLA, 27, POTCHEFSTROOM, LECTURER

Doing super sets in the gym and revamping the fridge helped Rammutla reach the lighter version of himself. "I changed the way I ate and began eating smaller meals in-between meals. I have been starting to change my lifestyle by eating smaller portions. I have a more structured plan because I know exactly what to eat."

He says he feels very good now: "People notice the difference, and I feel confident. You have more energy and you can do a lot of things – you wake up early and you can multitask."

RAMMUTLA'S WINNING TIPS

1. GET FIT FAST

"I used high intensity training where you have spurts of high exercise and cooling down. It's more effective than running on the treadmill at a constant pace because you run out of breath and you can feel it."

2. ALTERNATE YOUR TRAINING

When the gym gets packed, adapt your workout, Rammutla suggests. "I tended to mix my exercises up because sometimes the gym gets full and you

can't always train as recommended. You need to be able to tweak it here and there. That was nice about the programme – it kept changing to give your body a new challenge."

3. POWER THROUGH OBSTACLES

At first, Rammutla's body took a while to adjust to the heavy lifting and unfamiliar eating pattern. "The first two weeks were a challenge, but after three weeks your body starts getting used to it."



Weight **11kg**
Waist **14cm**
Chest **8cm**



UP YOUR STRENGTH WITH PROTEIN

ETTIENNE VAN DER MERWE, 29, PRETORIA, FINANCIAL MANAGER

At 11kg lighter, Van der Merwe is a new man – but it wasn't an easy journey. "A major challenge was leaving the *germorskos* – the fast food – and switching back to fish and chicken," he says.

He hit a wall in the first month, but powered through it. "I was very tired in the first three weeks. I didn't have energy to go to the gym but I pushed through every day and after a while it got better."

"Have a goal, stick with it and push through," he advises. "It's not a quick fix. It's hard work, it's commitment and it's willpower. This is literally a new lifestyle that you have to live. You don't do it for the 12 weeks and then stop."

"My self-image is through the roof and I've got more energy. It's not a body change, it's a mental change, and there are a lot of health benefits to that."

VD MERWE'S WINNING TIPS

1. BOOST YOUR IMMUNITY

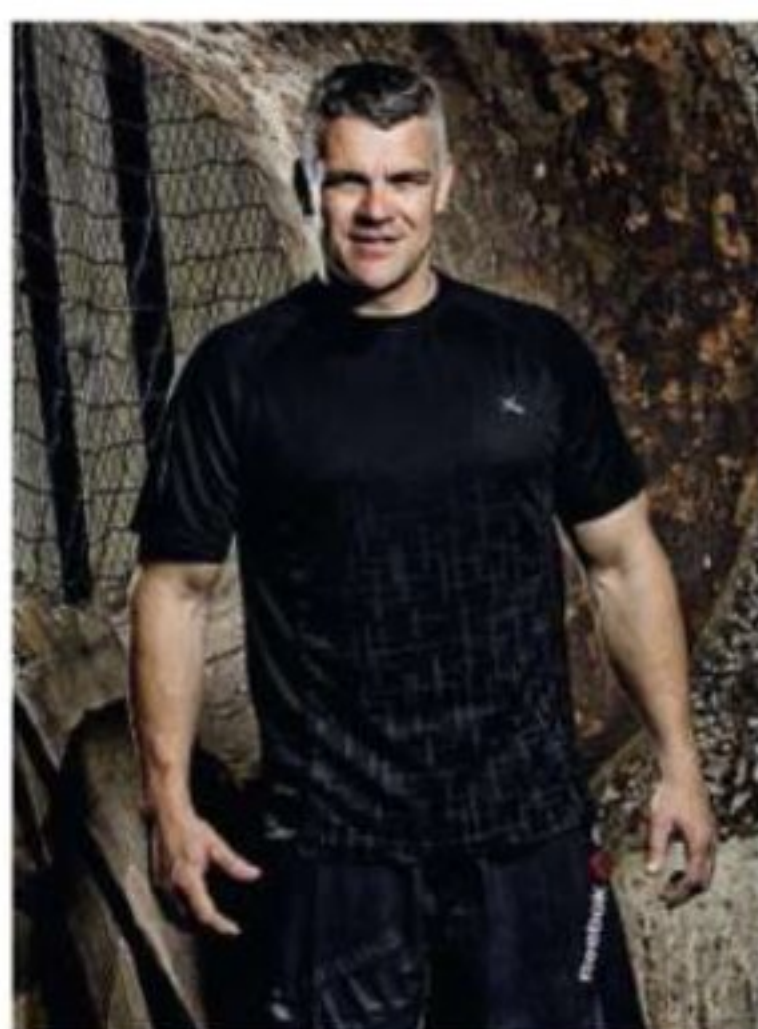
"When you're losing weight, it's very important to take your multivitamins, protein and amino acids. This helps you build your strength and you can go back to the gym quicker."

2. LIFT AND BURN

In his training routine, Van der Merwe mixed weights and cardio. "Weights were the most important for me." His go-to moves are leg raises and pull-ups. "They work your entire body."

3. SMALL CHANGES, BIG GAINS

Make small adjustments to your life, he advises. "Park further away from the gym so you have to walk there, put one less sugar in your tea, drink a glass of water when you wake up, drink green tea... It's small changes that don't take a lot of energy to do and you'll see great results from them."



Weight **6.5kg**
Waist **10cm**
Chest **10cm**



BURN FAT WITH FREE WEIGHTS

JOHAN DU PLESSIS, 41, PRETORIA, REGIONAL SALES MANAGER

"My goal was to get a best body at 40," says Du Plessis. "Once you get older, it gets more difficult to lose a kilogram of fat, but I just look at the benefits: you have energy throughout the day, you're not that tired anymore and it's easier to stand up or run up a flight of stairs, whereas in the past I would avoid those."

"It's such a change," he adds. "I had to buy new pants! Even now the size 36 is becoming too big. I haven't stopped training since. I'm still hitting the gym at least four times a week, and I dusted off my mountain bike."

"The big challenge is to keep it going but that's not so difficult once you see the results and you get remarks from people."

DU PLESSIS' WINNING TIPS

1. SLASH YOUR STARCHES

"Cutting back on starch was one of the best things that worked for me. It took discipline but once you get going it becomes second nature and in the end you can't eat white bread anymore."

2. FUEL YOUR FAT BURNER

"If you eat a little bit before training, it helps you keep your energy going longer," he advises.

3. TOTAL-BODY WORKOUT

Steal Du Plessis' killer move: take two dumbbells, put them at your feet, stand bent over

them, pick them up to waist height and continue with the move as if doing an arm curl. From there you continue straight up as if doing a military press. "It's one movement, so you come back all the way and then you put it down on the floor again."

4. FIND YOUR NICHE

"Once you get the recipe right in terms of what works for your body, you just have to stick to that. Once you see the benefits, the way you can move and pick up stuff, it really motivates you to go forward."



Weight **17kg**
Waist **16cm**
Chest **14cm**



TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR MEALS

CJ LIEBENBERG, 28, KLERKSDORP, SECURITY BUSINESS OWNER

Liebenberg used to have to take a breather while tying his shoelaces in the morning. He knew he had to make a change, but he kept postponing it. "I realised that I must do something about it because every time my son asked me to go play cricket, there was always an excuse."

Liebenberg's main motivation was his health. For three years he struggled to find the right medication for epilepsy. "I used to be very active, but then having the seizures meant I wasn't able to do anything," he says.

The numbers on his scale continue to tumble. "I notice small changes in little things, like playing games with my son. It's much easier now and you feel a hell of a lot better about yourself. At the same time I stopped smoking. It was quite a lot to take in but I'm a lot happier."

LIEBENBERG'S WINNING TIPS

1. EAT MORE, LOSE MORE

"The biggest change I made in my diet was eating smaller portion sizes, but eating more often during the day. Because I don't have time to make six meals, the day before I plan what I'm going to eat the next day. I drink a lot of water and for my in-between snacks I have fruit and unsalted nuts." He's cut his soft drinks down from six litres a day to two glasses a weekend.

2. FRY FAT

Liebenberg recommends core exercising for increasing stability and strength. "Now I'm doing short high intensity training on Mondays and Fridays," he says. "I keep the reps high but the resistance low. On Tuesdays and Thursdays I go jogging but it's also 50m sprints, and then 50m light jogging for about 20 minutes, and then on a Wednesday I do my cardio in the gym."



Weight 14kg
Waist 18cm
Chest 7cm



EAT TO KICK-START YOUR METABOLISM

MARK CONSTABLE, 40,
KUILS RIVER, FINANCIAL ADVISOR

"This *Belly Off! Challenge* is becoming a lifestyle for me," says Constable. "It changed the way I look at food and the way I look at myself." He's been reading *Men's Health* since 2005 and had always wanted to feature in the magazine. All it took was losing 14kg.

"My whole life's worth of eating and training I actually learnt in three months," he says. "Sometimes I can't stop talking to people about what I did and how I did it. Losing weight isn't only what's on the scale, it's what compliments people can give you on your body and the way you look – you look more confident and the confidence comes through."

CONSTABLE'S WINNING TIPS

1. DIY MUSCLE

Instead of signing a contract, he started to train at home. "I created a home gym and I'm amazed with how I transformed over the challenge."

2. SMASH YOUR LIMITS

A significant challenge for Constable was when he hit a plateau in the programme. "Everything just stagnates and you stay on that same level. It took me about a week to get through that."

3. KICKSTART YOUR METABOLISM

"What I've learnt over the three months is you get a belly because your metabolism is very slow and you need to kickstart it, so I started eating six times a day."

4. CHALLENGE YOURSELF

"Anyone can lose weight, so what you need to do is commit yourself and make it a priority to start. The most important thing is to ask, 'Why do I want to lose weight?' Every time I want to give up I'll ask myself that question."



Weight 15kg
Waist 27cm
Chest 18cm



UPGRADE YOUR ROUTINE WITH MARTIAL ARTS

DANI'YAL MANEVELD, 28, CAPE TOWN,
STRUCTURAL DRAUGHTSMAN

"I was fat all my life and since I was a child I've had very bad asthma," says Maneveld. "I couldn't even run for a minute before I started this programme."

"My plan was to lose a lot of weight and get fit really quickly, and it spilled over into other aspects of my life – like my personal and my professional life – as well. I've won back my confidence and my self-esteem. I've never had a six-pack and I'm aiming for that this summer."

MANEVELD'S WINNING TIPS

1. STRENGTH AND SPEED

"I was doing five sessions of cardio and five sessions of weight training a week, with cardio in the morning and then weights at night."

2. STRETCH YOUR LIMITS

Maneveld added Seni Silat, a Malaysian martial art, to his training. "It helps a lot with flexibility and I used those sessions as my stretch sessions, as well as for hand-eye coordination."

3. REV YOUR FAT FURNACE

"My cardio was quite strenuous. I used HIIT training where I would run for a minute, then

rest for about one-and-a-half minutes. I do it at about 60% rest and then 80 to 90% at full blast."

4. REVAMP YOUR PLATE

"My eating habits have changed immensely," says Maneveld. "My diet mostly comprises of veggies and stir-fries, grilled chicken, grilled trout and then one day over the weekend is my red meat day."

5. CHALLENGE YOURSELF

"I would say the best thing to do is to have a goal in mind and to work towards it. Don't set yourself too many big goals – do it with small, daily goals."

B E L L Y O F F ! G U I D E

GET BACK IN SHAPE

2 0 1 4

PHASE
2

Maintain Your Gains

PAGE **64** 50 WAYS TO OPTIMISE YOUR DIET

PAGE **74** MAKE YOUR WORKOUT WORK FOR YOU

PAGE **80** BIG MUSCLES IN 15 MINUTES

PAGE **86** A FIT MAN CAN...

BONUS!

50 Ways to Optimise Your Diet

HOW TO BOIL, SAUTÉ, ROAST AND CHOP YOUR WAY
TO FEWER KILOJOULES AND MORE NUTRIENTS

BY JEFF CSATARI

W

hen I face any difficult challenge, such as trying to get my kids to eat their veggies, I take comfort in Pete Seeger's folk tune "Step by Step." Let me sing it for you:

Step by step the longest march can be won, can be won. Many stones can form an arch, singly none, singly none. And by union what we will can be accomplished still. Drops of water turn a mill, singly none, singly none.

That chorus about the value of diligence and small steps holds the secret to making anything worthwhile happen, from learning to play the guitar to bouncing back from a job loss. It certainly applies to getting back in shape. Sure, it's not a revolutionary notion.

Heck, Seeger borrowed those words from a poem on

the cover of the 1864 constitution of the American Miners' Association. But it's smart. And it works.



#1 BUILD A BETTER PIZZA

Can't resist salami? Go ahead – but just once in a while, and don't overdo it. Start trying a little less meat and a lot more vegetables on your pizza. A little Italian sausage goes a long way, flavour-wise and vegetables can give your pizza more texture and interest. So load up and experiment – tossing on a wide variety of vegetables will give you extra fibre and antioxidants to help protect you from cancer.

2 SLICE YOUR STEAK THINNER, EAT LESS

Slicing thinly will make your portions seem bigger and more satisfying. In a recent study at Japan's National Food Research Institute, participants who compared equal amounts of sliced and whole vegetables rated the sliced piles up to 27% larger. When you believe you're eating a larger portion of food, you'll trick yourself into feeling more satisfied with fewer kilojoules.

4 GET GRATER TASTE FROM LESS CHEESE

Buy yourself a good cheese grater. Use it to grate a piece of Parmesan or other hard cheese on your sandwich and you'll save a lot of fat kilojoules compared with standard sliced fare, but only as long as you add a sprinkling for flavour rather than an avalanche of grated cheese.

5 EMBARGO THE OIL

When grilling chicken, amp up the flavour with this oil-free marinade: combine 3 cups of apple juice and 2 cloves of pressed garlic with 1 cup of reduced-sodium soy sauce.

6 MAKE LEANER WINGS

Cook up some spicy low-fat wings. Instead of using chicken wings, make them with skinless chicken-breast tenders. Marinate them overnight in a mixture of chilli sauce, olive oil, lots of garlic powder and red-wine vinegar. Then roast the chicken at 200°C for 15 minutes.

7 TOP A POTATO

If you love baked potatoes, you don't have to give them up just because of their high glycaemic load rating. Keep your blood-sugar levels balanced by adding a topping, such as Cheddar cheese, mushrooms, broccoli or spinach.

8 STUFF YOUR BURGERS

Scoop a hole in the middle of your burger before you braai and then fill it with olives, mushrooms or any other vegetable. This helps make the recommended serving of beef (85g) look and feel like a massive amount.

9 RINSE YOUR BEANS

Canned beans – kidney, cannellini, chickpeas – are a quick and easy way to add protein and fibre to your meals. But they can also spike your sodium intake,

3 KNOW YOUR DELI MEATS

When building a sandwich, you need to start with a solid foundation. The hierarchy of health, in descending order:

- * Turkey and chicken
- * Roast beef
- * Ham
- * Weird processed things like salami and olive loaf

For example, instead of an huge sarmie with cheese and mixed cold meats, choose something with roast beef and you can trim your fat intake by up to 30%.





10 DON'T RUIN A TUNA

Mayonnaise will turn your tuna sandwich into a fatty disaster. Instead of mixing in a lot of mayo, add pepper, chilli sauce and some fresh lemon juice to your tuna. It tastes great.

increasing your risk of stomach cancer and high blood pressure. Simply rinsing them, however, will shed one-third of their sodium.

11 SHAKE ON ORIGANUM

One tablespoon of fresh origanum has the same antioxidant power as an entire apple, according to researchers at the US Department of Agriculture. Mexican origanum has the highest count. One of the most versatile herbs, origanum can be added to anything from pasta to meats to salad dressings.

12 CATCH UP ON YOUR LYCOPENE

Squirt some organic tomato sauce on that bun. Researchers at the Agricultural Research Service in California found that organic tomato sauce has about twice as much cancer-fighting lycopene as the regular varieties. A simple visual clue you've got the correct one? Organic ones are a slightly darker shade of red than those bright red ones you get in takeaway packets.

13 GIVE IN TO OCCASIONAL CHOCOLATE CRAVINGS

You don't have to deprive yourself of the sweet stuff. Shave dark chocolate into savoury dishes like chilli and barbecue sauces – you'll add a rich flavour along with flavonoids. They can lower your risk of heart disease and keep your cholesterol in check. And shaving ensures you don't go overboard on the dark. Or try this for a night-time snack: melt 2 tablespoons of chocolate chips in the microwave and swirl that into 115g of

vanilla yoghurt. Top with a tablespoon of slivered almonds.

14 MAKE IT MEATLESS

Next time you're hankering for a big meaty sub, try this vegetarian hot sarmie. Brown some cubed aubergine pieces under a grill with a little olive oil. Then add some tomato sauce and capers. Place in a white roll. Top with grated Parmesan. Fat savings: 18 grams.

15 PACK A PITA

Add extra vegetables to your next sandwich by packing them in a wholewheat pita rather than between conventional slices of bread. Pitas simply hold more.



16 START A MEAL WITH A WATER APPETISER

Drink two glasses of water before every meal. This will keep you hydrated and make you feel less hungry, possibly reducing your food intake and aiding weight loss.

17 CURRY FAVOUR WITH YOGHURT

Replace the high-fat coconut milk in your homemade curries with low-fat plain yoghurt. The yoghurt adds that creamy texture without the extra fat from the coconut.

18 DO YOUR OWN DIPS

Make dips healthier by using fat-free sour cream or plain yoghurt. Mix in an equal part of salsa, the hotter the better. Jazz it up with lemon, dried herbs, whatever.

19 SQUASH THE FAT

Replace half the Cheddar in quesadillas, mac 'n' cheese or toasted cheese sandwiches with puréed butternut. This significantly lowers the fat and kilojoule counts, won't compromise the taste and gives you a slew of added vitamins and heart-healthy potassium.

20 STIR-FRY RIGHT

Let your vegetables stir-fry in their own moisture instead of an oil bath. Add a few drops of oil to start and then use water rather than more oil as you're stir-frying.

21 ADD CHEESE TO BREAKFAST

Grate hard cheese like Parmesan onto toast for added protein and flavour. "The key is to add protein to meals, as it fills you up faster and may help you burn more kilojoules," says Milton Stokes of the American Dietetic Association.

22 WARM UP YOUR OIL

Make sure the oil is hot before adding the food and the food will absorb less fat. Warm oil cooks more efficiently; cold oil soaks into meats and vegetables.

23 WRAP MEATS IN GREENS

To cut carbs, ditch the sandwich bread and do as the Koreans do: wrap spicy cooked beef or chicken with leafy greens. Try Chinese cabbage, bok choy or lettuce. Replacing two slices of bread with one large lettuce leaf saves you about 30 grams of carbohydrates.

24 GIVE YOUR PANCAKES A NUTRITIONAL BOOST

Next time you make pancakes, replace $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of flour with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of polenta. The combination will give your pancakes great texture, and the polenta will provide extra belly-filling fibre and an added dose of magnesium to an otherwise nutritionally vacant breakfast.



25 ALWAYS SAY "ICED TEA"

Get into the healthy habit. When the waitress asks what you want to drink, always say, "Iced tea – unsweetened." By choosing this beverage, you'll cut kilojoules and earn a dose of antioxidants, which are crucial to your body's defence against cancer, heart disease, even wrinkles. A study conducted by the US Department of Agriculture found that one serving of black tea had more flavonoids than a serving of broccoli or carrots.

26 GO HALFSIES

Here's a simple rule for buffet eating at a party that'll help you keep your meal balanced for weight loss: fill half your plate with vegetables and fruit. Then fill the rest of your plate with equal amounts of wholegrains and other high-fibre carbs and lean protein.

27 CREATE THE BEST STEAM ROOM FOR YOUR BROCCOLI

For perfectly cooked and nutrient-rich vegetables, rinse, throw them in a sealed container and then microwave for 3 or 4 minutes. Boiling, blanching or over-steaming on the stove zaps vegetables of their nutrients – the drops that cling after rinsing are the only water you need.

28 REPRISE BLAZING SADDLES

If all you have is instant white rice, just add a can of beans. The beans lessen the effect that the starchy white rice will have on your blood sugar.

29 BE SLICK WITH YOUR OIL

"Avoid splashing 'lite' olive oils over your salads," says Elena Paravantes, registered dietician for the Hellenic Dietetic Association in Greece – these oil varieties have fewer cancer-fighting antioxidants than the extra-virgin kind, plus they have a less intense flavour. Not sure if your oil's up to snuff? "Good-quality extra-virgin olive oil should have a fruity, peppery, slightly bitter taste and leave a faint burning sensation in the throat," she says.



30 BRING THE HEAT

Scientists at the University of Tasmania in Australia found that overweight people are more likely to slim down after consuming a meal that contains chilli peppers than after one that isn't on fire. Capsaicin, the chemical that makes chillies hot, may help the liver clear insulin – the hormone that tells your body to store fat – from the bloodstream after a meal.

31 BULK UP YOUR MEATBALLS

Grate carrots, squash or baby marrow into any meatball mixture. They add moisture, vitamins and bulk without altering that meaty flavour.

32 TURN YOUR SANDWICHES GREEN

Replace mayo with a spread of ripe avocado on a sandwich. Avocados are full of monounsaturated (good) fat to help lower your cholesterol. A study at Ohio State University found that phytochemicals in avocados may help prevent mouth cancer.

33 CHOOSE BROWN

Pick up the wholewheat bread instead of the standard white stuff. It'll have a lower glycaemic index which'll keep you fuller for longer.

34 TRY THIS SPIN ON A GYRO

For a low-fat gyro, mix some fat-free yoghurt with chopped or sliced cucumbers, add a squeeze of lemon juice and pour over a pita stuffed with grilled chicken or beef strips.

35 THICKEN YOUR SIDE DISHES

Replace the full-fat milk in your mashed potatoes with evaporated fat-free milk. It's lower in fat and higher in calcium per cup and still adds richness to your mash. You'll find it in a packet – usually near the baking aids.

36 SWAP RED MEAT FOR RED LENTILS

To make a low-fat, antioxidant-packed lasagna, use half the usual amount of mince and make up the difference with red lentils. They're still protein packed, but lentils are



37 KEEP YOUR ABS HARD WITH SOFT CHEESE

Use softer cheeses like goat's milk, feta and Ricotta as toppings on pizzas and sandwiches because they're naturally about a third lower in fat and kilojoules than harder cheeses. And when you need the full-fat cheeses, go for strong flavours like Parmesan, blue and extra-sharp Cheddar – you'll get the same great taste with less cheese

fat-free and high in fibre, making them more filling, too. And since red lentils have a neutral taste, they'll simply soak up the flavours in your sauce. You won't even notice them. Promise.

38 REVISE YOUR REUBEN

Simulate a cheese Reuben by replacing fatty corned beef with turkey ham and then topping it with low-fat Mozzarella, mustard, spicy shredded cabbage and gherkins. Slap all that on traditional rye bread and grill your sandwich until the cheese melts. Fat saving: 10 grams.

39 TRADE CRACKERS FOR OATS

In any meat recipe that calls for crackers or bread-crumbs, use an equal amount of rolled oats instead. This ramps up your soluble fibre intake, which can help lower your cholesterol. Use the quick-cooking varieties because they retain moisture well and don't alter the meaty taste.

40 GO FRY A COD

To soften some of the damage inflicted by Britain's national treasure, try this healthier DIY version of fish-and-chips:

- Buy fillets or loins of white fish, such as hake, haddock or cod and cut into strips.
- Make a light tempura-like batter by mixing iced sparkling water with self-rising flour.
- Dust the fish strips with self-rising flour and roll in the tempura batter.
- Shallow fry the strips in hot canola oil, which is loaded with good fats: fill one-third of your pan with oil and heat it to about 180°C. (Use a thermometer!) Fry the fish until crispy.
- For the chips: cut potatoes into your preferred size and toss them in 1 to 2 tablespoons of canola oil with salt,

herbs, garlic – anything you want, really. Bake them at 230°C until browned and crispy, about 30 minutes..

41 PREVENT BLOOD SUGAR SPIKES WITH VINEGAR

Start a meal with a salad or vegetables drizzled with a vinaigrette. Nutritionists from Arizona State University believe that the acetic acid in vinegar interferes with enzymes that break down carbohydrates. Just a few teaspoons of vinegar a meal can keep blood sugar levels from rising quickly.

42 EAT THE CRUMBS

If you're grilling something with a topping of grated cheese, cut fat by halving the cheese and replacing it with wholewheat breadcrumbs. This mimics the crispy texture of grilled cheese and adds fibre.

43 SLIM YOUR CHICKEN SALAD

Use thick, Greek-style plain yoghurt to cut down on the amount of mayo you need to make chicken, tuna or egg mayo sandwiches.

44 FREEZE YOUR BANANAS

That way they will always be on hand for use in a smoothie. And because they are naturally sweet, you won't need any sugar.





45 LEAVE NO FLAKE BEHIND

To get all the vitamins out of your cereal, drink the milk left in the bowl. You've admirably resisted the chocolate stuff in favour of a less sugary breakfast cereal that's fortified with vitamins, but that doesn't mean you're actually getting all the nutrients listed on the side of the box. Up to 40% of the vitamins in your cereal dissolve into that orphaned puddle of milk. Drink up.

46 KEEP A FEW PRAWNS ON HAND

For an easy way to add lean protein to your meals, stock up on frozen prawns. They defrost in just 15 minutes under cold running water. And with the cooked variety, you have an instant healthy snack. If uncooked, throw into your pasta sauces, stir-fries or noodle soups in the last five minutes of cooking.

47 SHELL YOUR NUTS...

Buy nuts in their shells. More time shelling equals less time shovelling handfuls into your mouth.

48 ...BUT BOIL THEM FIRST

Boil your peanuts (in their shells) for about three hours. Researchers at Alabama A&M University found that

boiled peanuts – a popular snack food in China, Southeast Asia, Australia and the southern US – have up to four times more antioxidants than raw, dry or roasted peanuts.

49 POUR A SECOND ROUND

A bottled soft drink can contain 2 to 2.5 servings, but of course, it's common to drink the whole bottle in a sitting. Cut your kilojoules in half by pouring half the bottle into a glass to drink now and then putting the rest of the bottle in the fridge.

50 DOUBLE THE ORDER

Order pizza with double tomato sauce and low-fat cheese. Reducing the Mozzarella by just one-third will save 20 grams of fat. That's as much as in a McDonald's Quarter Pounder. And if you double the sauce on your pizza, you get double the lycopene. Having a sarnie? Order double tomato slices for extra lycopene.

Make Your Workout Work for You

YOU'VE GOT QUESTIONS, WE'VE GOT ANSWERS.
MEN'S HEALTH ENLISTS THE HELP OF OUR TOP EXPERTS
TO TACKLE ALL YOUR FITNESS CONUNDRUMS

1 WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO BUILD MY CALF MUSCLES?

The same way Arnold built his: isolation. Before he was Mr Olympia, Schwarzenegger cut the legs off his sweat pants and targeted his skinny calves until they looked as buff as his upper body. In your case, skip the scissors and just do standing and seated calf raises at a slow tempo. "Most guys blow through sets and move too quickly to improve the soleus and gastrocnemius, the two muscles that make your calves look meaty," says Mike Robertson, certified strength and conditioning specialist and co-owner of a gym. "Slowing the exercise minimizes contributions from other muscles and places the stress on the muscles in your calves." Aim for two sets of 20 reps of both seated and standing calf raises three times a week. Take two seconds to raise the weight and two seconds to lower it, and hold the bottom position for two seconds.





2 WHAT'S A QUICK WAY TO COOL DOWN AFTER A LUNCHTIME WORKOUT?

We threw this question out to Sam Cheuvront, a research physiologist at the US Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine, who recommended the old standby: a cold shower. Before you cringe, don't worry – cool water is also effective, Cheuvront says. You'll feel better instantly, but your body needs five minutes to cool down internally. Afterwards, towel off and rub on a tonic spiked with menthol. The menthol aids evaporation and stimulates the cooling receptors in the skin, creating a refreshing chill. Next, drink a slushie. (Make it by pouring a sport drink over shaved ice.) Australian research reveals that this lowers your core temperature faster than sipping cold water does.

3 WHAT'S THE BEST EXERCISE TO TARGET LOVE HANDLES?

You can't spot-reduce fat, but those handles will be history if you slim down all around and then build up your obliques. Start off with one of the fastest fat burners known to man: the metabolic circuit. Once you shed your spare tyre, add the full-contact twist to your workout. "It's a hybrid between a plank and a crunch performed standing up," explains certified strength and conditioning specialist Alexander Koch, an associate professor of exercise science at Truman State University. All you need is a towel, a regular 20-kilogram barbell and the corner of a room. Remove all the weight plates from the barbell, place the towel over one end and then wedge that end into the corner. Next, hold the other end of the barbell at a 45-degree angle from the floor, with your arms extended straight out in front of you. Now swing the bar to the right side of your body in a fast rotation (stop before it goes behind your body), while pivoting with your left foot. Then twist back to the left side while pivoting with your right foot. That's one rep. Aim to complete three to five sets of 10 to 20 reps.

4 CAN PLAYING VIDEO GAMES ON THE WII HELP ME LOSE WEIGHT?

It depends whether you want to use Wii Tennis as your go-to workout or as a bonus kilojoule burner. "Video games can play a role in your weekly regimen, but they aren't enough by themselves to cause significant weight loss," says Kevin Short, an assistant professor of paediatrics at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. In his studies with children, he found that those who played Wii Sports games, including boxing and bowling, at high intensity burned approximately 12.5 kilojoules a minute – the equivalent of walking about 4.2 kilometres an hour on a treadmill. (Short says these results would probably be similar in adults.) So in other words, don't count on virtual sports to shed kilos in the real world.

5 HOW CAN I CONTINUE TO BUILD STRENGTH WITHOUT BULKING UP?

To a great extent, muscle size and muscle strength are interdependent: as you become stronger your muscles grow, and as your muscles grow you become stronger. That said, it is possible to fine-tune your regimen to emphasise strength over size, says exercise scientist Koch. "To build

strength, you have to train your nervous system to recruit and activate more muscle cells.” The best way to achieve this is to lift heavier weights (around 85% of your one-rep max) and do fewer reps (three to five). Placing your muscles under great tension for a short period not only forces them to fire in a more coordinated way, but also signals them to increase the number of myofibrils, the bundles of filaments in your muscle fibre that power contraction. The result: you can generate more force. Focus on lifting in that three to five-rep range and aim to increase the weight you lift every workout so that your strength never plateaus.

6 I'M TOO BUSY TO WORK OUT. WHEN WILL MY MUSCLE LOSS BEGIN?

“You will notice some lack of muscle tone and strength after three to four weeks. To maintain muscle, you need to strength train three days a week for 45 minutes. But a week off every four months can help your training efforts,” says David Pearson, a professor of exercise physiology at Ball State University and a senior editor of the *Strength and Conditioning Journal* of the National Strength and Conditioning Association.

7 DOES IT MATTER WHAT TIME OF DAY I STRENGTH TRAIN?

“No. Just be consistent in order to maximise your muscle growth,” advises Pearson. “Your testosterone levels fluctuate during the day and will adjust to your workouts. Therefore, exercising at the same time every day ensures that you will have higher levels of testosterone during your workout, which can lead to bigger strength gains.”

8 SHOULD I DO MY CARDIO BEFORE I LIFT WEIGHTS OR AFTER?

If you're using the same muscles for weight training and cardio (say, a day of lower-body lifting and jogging), weight training should come first, says Alan Aragon, a nutritionist and weight-loss expert. Weights preserve muscle when you're dieting; cardio does not. But if you're training, say, your arms and jogging, the order doesn't matter much. Start with whichever motivates you.

9 THE PROS TAKE ICE BATHS AFTER WORKOUTS. SHOULD I?

“Ice baths reduce inflammation caused by intense, repetitive exercise and they also speed recovery,” says Dr Andrew J. Feldman, the director of sports medicine at St. Vincent's Medical Center in New York and physician to professional athletes. “Proper workouts shouldn't cause that kind of damage. I do advise ice baths for runners with tendinitis and spot icing for guys rehabbing – for example, a man lifting after a rotator-cuff injury.”





10 WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BARE-FOOT-STYLE SHOES?

The shoes provide the potential for greater explosiveness, improved coordination and less musculoskeletal pain, says certified strength and conditioning specialist Jay Dicharry, director of the University of Virginia's motion analysis lab and centre for endurance sport. Here's why: because they have thin and flexible soles, barefoot-style shoes boost proprioception, which is the feedback that travels from your feet to your brain with every step. And the more data you deliver to your brain, the more efficiently and powerfully the brain's signals can move your body. But don't toss your current kicks without first testing your wheels: close your eyes and stand barefoot on one leg for 30 seconds. Repeat with the other leg. If either foot rolls outwards, it's too weak to train in barefoot shoes. The best way to improve: balance on each leg for 30 seconds, 15 times a day.

11 IF PAIRING PROTEIN WITH CARBS HELPS BUILD MUSCLE, WILL IT HELP WEIGHT LOSS?

Yes. Although you might think that the carbs will slow weight loss, the opposite can be true, says Aragon. Carbs plus protein helps build muscle (especially if you eat the combo just before and after exercise), and that can indirectly enhance fat loss, because muscle is metabolically active tissue that helps burn more kilojoules around the clock.

12 HOW SHOULD I MEASURE MY BODY FAT?

Tracking your progress can be helpful, but every testing method, from callipers to dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry, is flawed, says Aragon. Your two best indicators are the mirror and your clothes. Use a pair of jeans that you want to fit into as a measure of progress. Is the button tight? As they loosen up, you'll know you're nearing your goal.

13 SHOULD I SKIP SLEEP TO MAKE MORE TIME FOR A WORKOUT?

If you're sleep deprived and not just groggy, stay in bed. University of Chicago researchers report that lack of sleep can torpedo weight loss by slowing metabolism, increasing appetite and decreasing the number of kilojoules burned.

14 IF I SIT ON A STABILITY BALL INSTEAD OF A CHAIR AT MY OFFICE, WILL I LOSE WEIGHT?

Sitting on a ball might help strengthen your core, but it won't help you shed significant kilojoules, says Aragon. The misconception comes, in part, from studies on non-exercise activity. Fidgeting, a common example, is often cited as a way to help burn extra kilojoules. Mayo Clinic researchers found a significant increase in energy expenditure if you fidget while standing. But that effect is not as pronounced if you fidget while seated. So any difference between ball

sitting and chair sitting is probably too small to have a real impact. His advice: save the ball for the gym. Work is stressful enough without the extra task of balancing your way through it for minimal returns.

15 CAN DIETS PLATEAU AND BECOME INEFFECTIVE?

No. The longer you stick with one weight loss programme, the more successful you'll be, says Aragon. The key to diet longevity is a realistic, flexible eating plan. "Most people eat too little and go into defensive mode when cravings strike. Then they cheat, then feel bad, then resist and then cheat again. It's an endless cycle," he says. So if you're craving ice cream, go ahead and grab a spoon. Just dig in moderation.

16 WHAT'S MY BEST BET FOR SHIN SPLINTS: ICE OR HEAT?

"Before activity, 'heat up' the area internally with a good warm-up and stretch. After activity, place ice directly on your shin," says Nicholas A. DiNubile, an orthopaedic surgeon and clinical assistant professor at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

17 WHAT ACTIVITY SHOULD I ADD TO MY WORKOUT ROUTINE TO IMPROVE CARDIOVASCULAR FITNESS?

Kick up your workouts with interval training, alternating short bursts of high-intensity exercise with easy recovery. "Intervals also stoke fat burning and boost HDL cholesterol, the good kind," says Dr Michael Fred-ericson, an associate professor in the department of orthopaedic surgery at Stanford University and the head physician for the school's track, cross-country, swimming and gymnastics teams.

18 IDEALLY, WHAT SHOULD MY RESTING HEART RATE BE?

"A medical physiology textbook will tell you a normal resting heart rate is around 70 beats a minute," says Steven T. Devor, professor of exercise physiology at Ohio State University. "Power-sport athletes have resting heart rates lower than that, but not as low as endurance athletes', which can reach the low 40s."



19 DO I NEED TO EAT BEFORE MY MORNING WORKOUT?

To pump up the effectiveness of your workout, eat a simple carbohydrate that will digest quickly and give you the boost of energy you'll need, suggests nutritionist Heidi Skolnick. Try starting small: even a few crackers, half a banana or an orange will help.

20 I OFTEN GIVE IN TO MY CRAVINGS. DO I JUST LACK WILLPOWER?

Don't be too quick to blame yourself, says Dr Louis Aronne, a clinical associate professor of medicine at Cornell University's Weill Medical College. "Studies show that cravings are not strongly associated with a lack of willpower. Instead, try to identify and avoid the environmental and emotional situations that trigger your cravings," he says.

21 WHAT'S AN EASY WAY TO CALCULATE HOW MANY KILJOULES TO TAKE IN IF I WANT TO DROP FIVE KILOS?

For a good estimate, you'll need a calculator and an honest accounting of your exercise habits, says Aragon. He uses this simple process with clients who want to shed excess weight: first convert your target weight from kilograms to pounds by multiplying the weight in kilos by 2.2 [eg. $80 \times 2.2 = 176\text{lbs}$]. Now multiply that number by $[10 + \text{your total weekly exercise hours}]$. The result will be your daily kilojoule intake. For example, if your target weight is 176 pounds and your weekly training includes 3 hours of weights and 1 hour of running, the maths would work out to 2 464 calories a day. To convert calories to kilojoules, multiply by 4.18 [$2\,464 \times 4.18 = 10\,300$]. Missed a workout? Just reduce your intake by 1 500 to 3 200 kilojoules, depending on how long or hard you typically train, says Aragon.



Big Muscles in 15 Minutes

NO TIME TO EXERCISE?
SORRY, THAT EXCUSE IS NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE

BY SELENE YEAGER

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ive us 15 minutes and we'll transform your body. Don't have 15 to spare? Rubbish, Facebook friend. Statistics released in early 2013 indicate that the average South African Facebook user spends around 7¼ hours a month on the site. Guess how much time that works out to a day? A whole 15.5 minutes.

It's time to edit your profile.

According to a recent study in the *European Journal of Applied Physiology*, 15 minutes of resistance training can elevate your resting energy expenditure for 72 hours after exercise just as effectively as 35 minutes can. That means you'll burn off your gut and build muscle faster than you ever thought possible.

Even the most prolific poster can do it.

Now there's a new tool to help make the excuses harder to muster: we've got just the two workouts to get you started – a metabolic circuit for trimming down and a sports-specific programme based on water skiing that'll get you sweating in no time.

Ready? This won't take long.



15-MINUTE LOWER BODY WORKOUT

Anyone who's ever experienced rubbery legs after a full day water skiing knows that skiing (and stuff like snowboarding) demands lower-body power like almost nothing else. Your legs are shock absorbers working with your core as you bound, hop and carve your way down the mountain or along a river. Whether you board or ski, this workout can give you strong leg muscles and endurance to stay in control through the day's last run.

Do the routine as a circuit, performing the prescribed number of reps for each move and then moving to the next without resting. Then rest a minute after you complete the circuit. Repeat, doing a total of three full circuits.

1/ DROP LUNGE

A Using an overhand grip, hold a barbell on your shoulders behind your neck. Stand with your feet even and about hip-width apart. This is the starting position.

B Step back with your right foot so your right leg crosses behind your left. Try to reach as far back and as wide as possible as you sink into a deep lunge. Descend until your back knee nearly touches the floor and then immediately drive upwards to return to the starting position. Complete all your reps and repeat, this time stepping back with your left foot.

REPS 8 to 10 with each leg



2/ BOSU MEDICINE-BALL TWIST

A Stand on the flat side of a Bosu in an athletic stance with a slight bend in your knees and hips. Hold a medicine ball at chest level with your arms straight in front of you. This is the starting position.

B Keeping your hips forwards and using only your core, rotate your upper body as far to the left as possible.

C Return to the starting position and rotate your upper body as far to the right as possible. That's 1 rep.

REPS 5 to 8



3 / BOSU JUMP

A Balance on the rounded side of a Bosu in an athletic stance. Brace your core and bend your knees.

B Explode up, raising your arms to gain height and rotate your body anticlockwise 180 degrees. As soon as you land, bend your knees and jump, again rotating anticlockwise 180 degrees, back to the starting position. That's 1 rep.

REPS 5 anticlockwise and 5 clockwise



4 / SKI HOP

A Hold a pair of light dumbbells with your palms facing in and arms straight. Stand with your feet hip-width apart in front of a sturdy box or step that's about 45 centimetres high. Now squat until your thighs are about 45 degrees to the floor. This is the starting position.

B Press your feet into the floor and then swing your arms up as you explosively jump onto the box. The weights should end up near your shoulders.

C Immediately push off to jump down backwards. Land softly on the balls of your feet, return to the starting position and repeat.

REPS 20



5 / LATERAL MEDICINE-BALL HOP

A Standing with your feet together, hold a medicine ball in front of your chest. Bound laterally to your right. When your right foot hits the floor, bend that knee and bend at the waist to move the ball down to the outside of your right foot.

B Straighten your body and repeat to the left side.

REPS 5 to 6 to each side

TIP As you bend to reach with the ball over your front foot, swing your opposite leg back for balance.



15-MINUTE TOTAL-BODY DUMBBELL BLAST

This old-school dumbbell routine builds muscle and melts unwanted flab the old-fashioned way – hard work, no rest.

Do this four-exercise circuit with no break between exercises. Then, after you've finished the circuit, rest for 90 seconds before doing it again. Do three complete circuits.

1/ SEATED CALF RAISE

A Place a step in front of a bench, grab a pair of dumbbells and sit down. Set the balls of both your feet on the step and hold a dumbbell vertically on each knee. Lower both heels as far as you can without touching the floor.

B Push off the balls of your feet and lift your heels as high as you can. Pause and repeat.

REPS 10 to 12



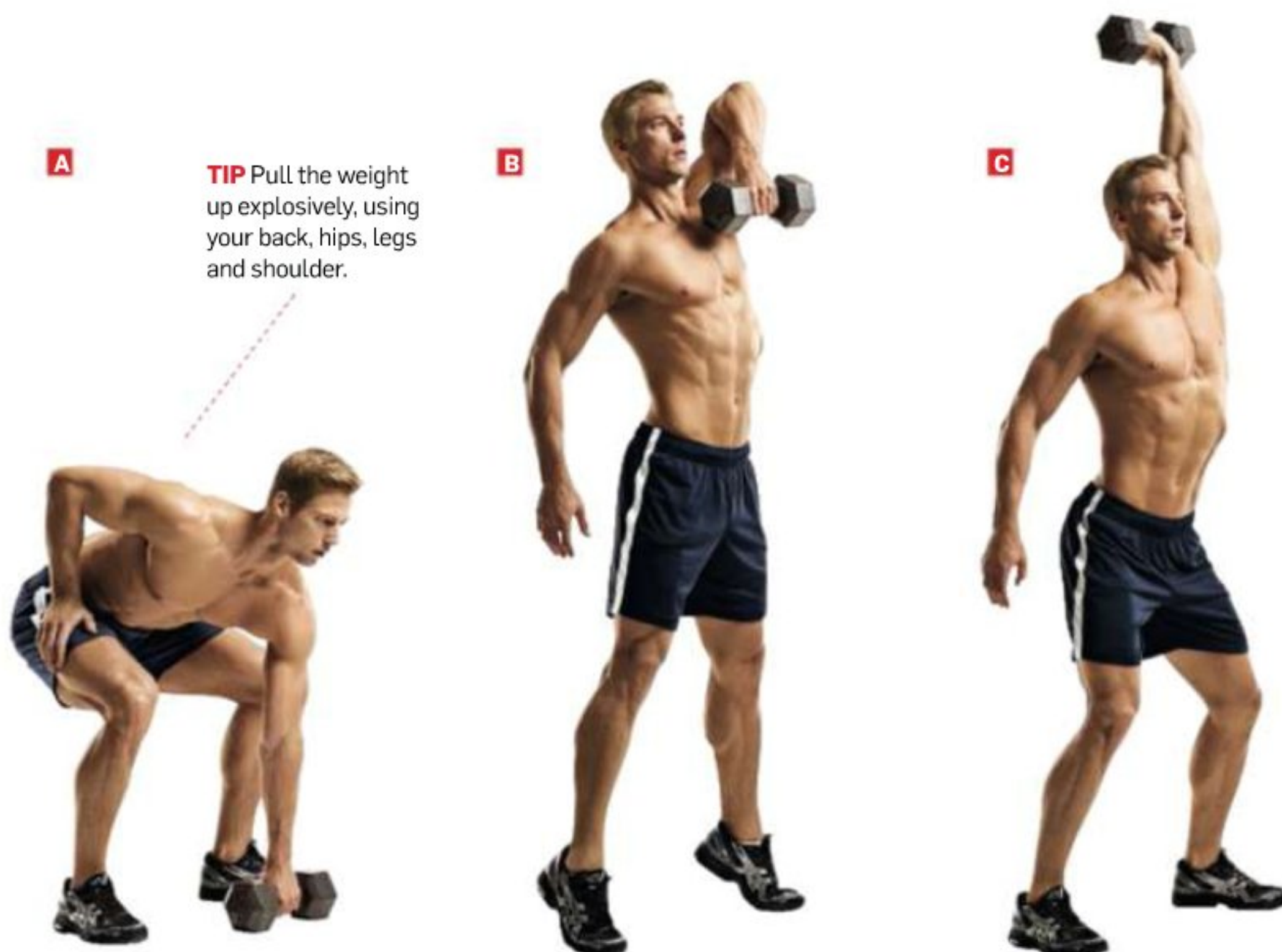
2/ ONE-ARM SNATCH

A Hold a dumbbell in your left hand using an overhand grip. With your feet shoulder-width apart, bend your knees and place the dumbbell on the floor.

B Perform a high pull: in one explosive movement, straighten your legs and hips while bending your elbow to pull the dumbbell upwards.

C At the dumbbell's highest point, drop your hips and "catch" the weight by rotating your wrist under the dumbbell. Quickly straighten your arm so the dumbbell is now over the top of your shoulder. That's 1 rep.

REPS 10 with each arm





3 / INCLINE BENCH PRESS

A Grab a pair of dumbbells and lie on your back on a bench set to a low incline (15 to 30 degrees). Lift the dumbbells up to arm's length so they're over your chin and hold them with your palms turned to the front (thumbs facing each other).

B Slowly lower the weights to your upper chest, pause and push them back up over your chin.

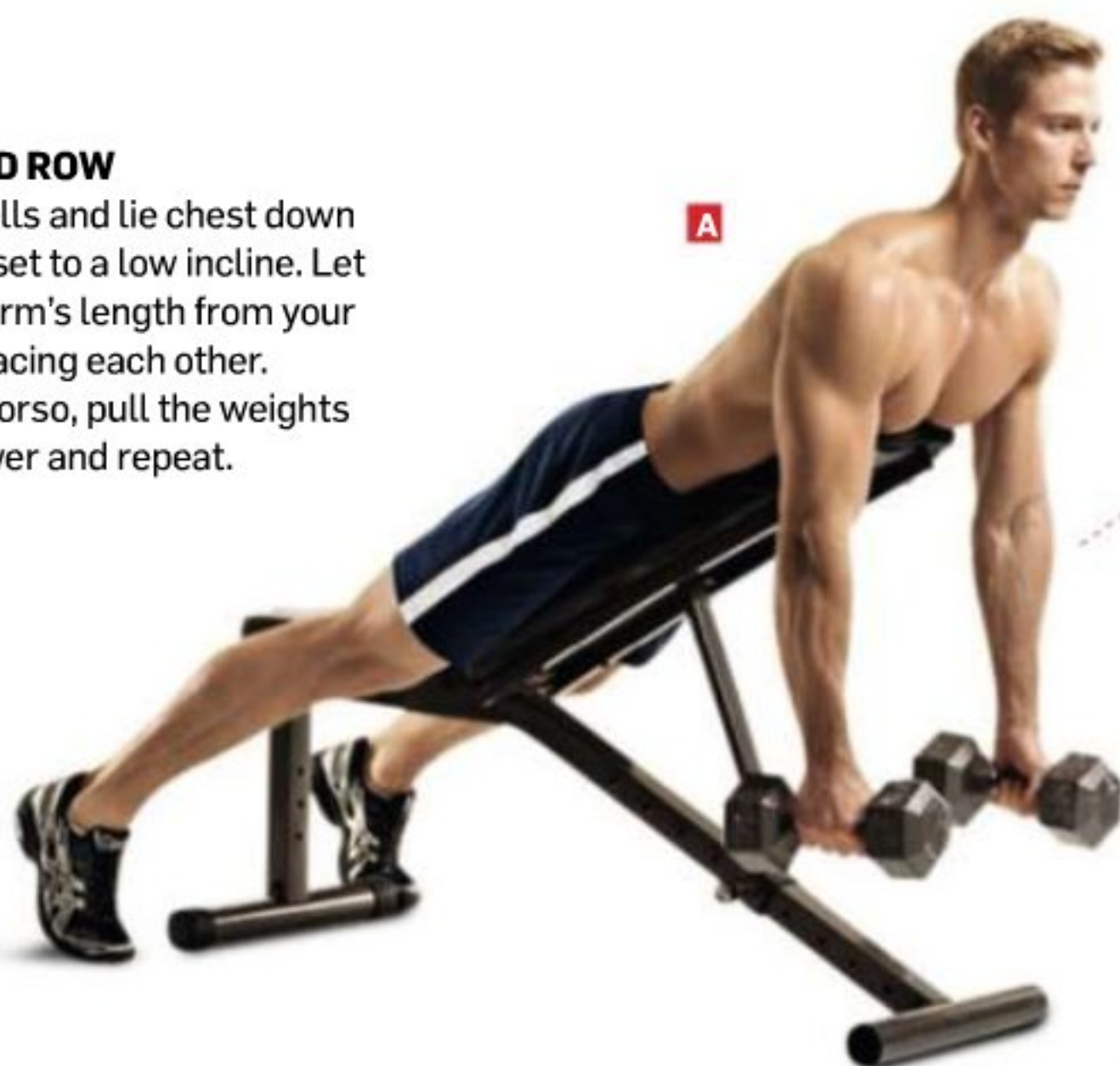
REPS 10 to 12

4 / CHEST-SUPPORTED ROW

A Grab a pair of dumbbells and lie chest down on an adjustable bench set to a low incline. Let the dumbbells hang at arm's length from your shoulders, your palms facing each other.

B Without moving your torso, pull the weights to your sides. Pause, lower and repeat.

REPS 10 to 12



TIP Keep your arms close to your sides as you row.



A *Fit Man Can...*

START YOUR TRANSFORMATION BY TARGETING
THESE 12 ULTIMATE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

BY ADAM CAMPBELL

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admittedly high standards right away, we've given you the tips and training strategies you need to get there quickly. Then you won't need to look in a dictionary for the definition of fit.

You can just look in a mirror.

e have a lot of time on our hands, so the other day we looked up "fit" in the dictionary. We read about fit (as in flipping out) and fit (as in what your hat should do) before finally landing on definition number three: "Sound physically and mentally."

Not exactly helpful. After all, it didn't say squat about how many push-ups a man should be able to do. Or how much weight he should be able to lift. Or how fast he should be able to sprint.

Which is why we've taken matters into our own hands. In this chapter, you'll find our definition of fit – 12 simple (though by no means easy) things every man must be able to do before he stamps himself "in shape". Says who? Says us.

The good news: if you don't measure up to our



Actual results (like yours) may vary

The ideal fitness scores for the tests on the following pages are based on reference ranges for 20- to 29-year-old men. Note: get a physical before taking these tests if you're over 40 or have two or more of the following risk factors for heart disease: you're overweight, you're sedentary, you smoke or you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol.

A FIT MAN CAN... BENCH-PRESS $1\frac{1}{2}$ TIMES HIS BODY WEIGHT

Upper-body strength is important for more than bench-press bragging rights. Literally being able to throw your weight around – plus half that of the guy standing next to you – is the ultimate sign that you'll never have a problem hanging drywall, holding your ground or... looking great without your shirt on.

The test Use a bench press machine and keep your feet flat on the floor during the entire lift. To figure out your score, divide the heaviest weight you can lift once by your body weight.

THE SCORECARD

Less than 1.0: Weak

1.0 to 1.49: Ordinary

1.5 or more: You rule on the bench

Boost your bench The key to strengthening any muscle is lifting fast, says Louie Simmons, strength coach to five of the world's top bench-pressers. Follow Simmons's plan for four weeks to improve your own bench-press performance.

- Choose a weight that's about 40% of what you can lift once and perform nine sets of three repetitions, with 60 seconds' rest between sets. Lower and raise the bar as fast as possible and alternate your grip every three sets, so that your hands are 40, then 50 and then 60 centimetres apart.

- Three days later, complete three sets of flat, incline or decline barbell bench presses (alternate varieties each week) with the heaviest weight you can lift six times.

BONUS TIP Press your head into the bench as you lift. You'll activate the muscles called neck extensors, which help ensure that your spine is in a straight line. That'll put your body in a stronger position.

A FIT MAN CAN... RUN 2.4KM IN 10 MINUTES

Breaking the 10-minute mark for nearly 2.5km isn't just a sign that you can outrun the cops. It's also an indicator of peak aerobic capacity – your body's ability to deliver oxygen to your working muscles. Regular aerobic exercise lowers your cholesterol and helps keep your body fat low – both of which significantly decrease your risk of heart disease.

The test Run 2.4km on a flat path as fast as you can.



THE SCORECARD

12 minutes or more: Slow

Between 10 and 12 minutes: Ordinary

10 minutes or less: Endurance excellence

Air out your aerobic ability To build aerobic capacity, you need to run far. But you also need to run fast, says Barrie Shepley, Canadian Olympic triathlon coach. Follow Shepley's plan for six to 10 weeks and you'll increase your endurance by about 30%.

- Perform a 40- to 60-minute run on Saturday at a pace just slow enough that you never feel winded.



(Walk if you need to.)

- On Tuesday, do four to six 0.8km intervals at your goal pace for the 2.4km run. (So if your goal is to run 2.4km in 10 minutes, run each interval in three minutes and 20 seconds.) Rest for the same amount of time as each interval takes.

- On Thursday, perform four to six uphill runs at a moderate pace, with each run lasting about 90 seconds, and take about two minutes' rest after each interval. After your last interval, jog for 10 to 15 minutes at an easy pace.

BONUS TIP Split the distance into four intervals and run them at a pace that's about 10% faster than your 2.4km pace, resting one minute after each.

A FIT MAN CAN... TOUCH THE RIM

Touch the rim?

You bet. In addition to the fact that a fit man just ought to be able to show off once in a while, a good vertical leap is the ultimate sign of lower-body power. It means you can combine lower-body speed and strength into one quick movement. And that'll help you any time you need to move explosively – stealing a run, grabbing a rebound, diving for cover. (For the record: guys with the best hops always have help from genetics, plus a few extra centimetres, but a fit man should still be able to

score high on the vertical-jump test. If the rim is out of reach, make the backboard your goal.)

The test You'll need a small bag of chalk to do this test. Chalk your fingers and stand flat-footed next to a wall. Place your chalked hand as high as possible on the wall and mark it with your fingertips. Then, without taking a step, dip your knees, swing your arms up and jump as high as you can, again marking the wall with your fingertips. The distance between the two marks is your vertical-jump height.

THE SCORECARD

50cm or less: Grounded

Between 50 and 66cm: Ordinary

Higher than 66cm: High-flyer

Have better hops To leap higher, you have to practise explosive jumps, says Craig Ballantyne, a strength coach.

- Stand on a box or step that's about 30cm high. Step off the box, and as soon as your feet hit the floor, jump as high as you can. Repeat five times.

- Do four more sets, this time resting 30 seconds between sets.

BONUS TIP Never use your first jump as your score. You can expect maximum air on your third attempt.

A FIT MAN CAN... LEG-PRESS 2 1/4 TIMES HIS BODY WEIGHT

When it comes to strength, your lower half is your better half. Your leg and butt muscles are the foundation of your body and essential for almost any activity – from standing upright to sprinting to pushing your brother-in-law's Hyundai out of a ditch. You're 80kg? Make your leg-press goal 180kg. Your brother-in-law will bow in your presence.

The test Assume the position in the leg-press machine. Lower the weight until your knees are bent 90 degrees, then push the weight back up. To calculate your score, divide the highest amount of weight you can lift once by your body weight.

THE SCORECARD

Less than 1.8: A shaky foundation

1.8 to 2.2: Ordinary

More than 2.2: Serious strength

Strengthen your legs Try this technique, known as diminished-rest interval training. Mastering it will help you improve your leg-press performance by 10 to 20% in

just three weeks, says Alwyn Cosgrove, owner of Results Fitness.

- Choose a weight that's about 95% of the amount you lifted in the test and complete a total of 10 sets of one repetition, resting for 80 seconds after each set.

- Complete this workout twice a week, each time reducing the rest period between sets by 10 seconds. Then, when your rest period is down to 30 seconds, retake the test and increase the amount of weight.

BONUS TIP Right before you take the test, do a leg press with 20% more weight than what you think you can lift once – but lower the weight only halfway before pushing it back up. That way, when you perform the test, your muscles will be expecting to lift a much heavier weight. In the end, it'll not only seem easier, but you'll be able to push more kilos.

A FIT MAN CAN... SWIM 650M IN 12 MINUTES

Funny thing about swimming: we know guys who can run 40 kilometres without breathing hard, yet sink to the bottom of the pool after half a lap. Why? Because swimming requires both aerobic capacity and upper-body muscle (the kind a lot of those marathoners lack).

The test Swim as far as you can in 12 minutes. Your total distance in metres is your score.

THE SCORECARD

Less than 450m: You're sunk

450 to 640m: Ordinary

More than 640m: Aquatic excellence

Swim better, swim further According to the American Swim Coaches Association, only two out of 100 Americans swim well enough to complete 400 metres without stopping. That's usually because they have poor form, says Terry Laughlin, author of *Swimming Made Easy*. Follow this rule: keep your head aligned with your body (the way you hold it when you're not in the water) the entire time you're swimming. When you breathe, roll your entire body – as if you were breathing with your belly button – without changing the position of your head. You'll float better and use less energy. And that means you'll be able to swim further.

BONUS TIP Swim 25 metres (the width of an Olympic size swimming pool) at a time to practise your form. Start by swimming a total of 200 metres per session – eight 25 metre intervals. Add 50 metres each week until you're swimming a total of at least 450 metres. Increase

your intervals by 25 metres every two weeks until you're able to swim the entire distance without stopping.

A FIT MAN CAN... DO 100 PUSH-UPS

Physical fitness isn't just about lifting. It's about how strong you are relative to your body weight, says Martin Rooney, author of *Ultimate Warrior Workouts*. That's why he has his athletes-in-training do body-weight tests. If they struggle, they need to either gain strength or lose weight. Test yourself the same way with his push-up challenge.

The test Complete as many push-ups as you can in three minutes.

Rules

1 Rest whenever you want, but keep the clock running the whole time.

2 For a rep to count, you must maintain perfect form: elbows locked at the top, chest 5 centimetres above the floor at the bottom, hips not sagging and knees not touching the floor.

3 Pace yourself however you'd like, but it's best not to rush, Rooney says. Take a 15-second break once you slow down after your first burst. Then take longer breaks as you become more tired, he says. Never push yourself to total fatigue.

THE SCORECARD

Less than 55 push-ups: Below average
55 to 74 push-ups: Average
75 to 99 push-ups: Good
100 to 110 push-ups: Excellent
111 or more: Extraordinary

How to boost your score Add push-ups to your routine twice a week for the next four weeks, says Rooney. Follow this push-up protocol, trying to do each rep as quickly as possible. Then take five days off from push-ups and retest yourself.

	SETS	PUSH-UPS	REST BETWEEN SETS
WEEK 1	4	20	2 minutes
WEEK 2	6	15	1 minute
WEEK 3	4	25	1 minute
WEEK 4	3	As many as you can	2 minutes

BONUS TIP Problems to look for:

• If you can't do 15 push-ups with perfect form...

Your chest and triceps are weak. Strengthen them by doing regular high-rep (12 to 15) sets of the bench press and triceps push-down. Also try push-ups in a power rack on a barbell so you can set your body at an incline, making the push-up easier. As you improve, lower the barbell until you're doing regular push-ups.

• If your hips sag during push-ups...

Your core is weak. Planks and side planks build stability and endurance in your core and mimic the movement needed to succeed at push-ups. They're also great ab workouts.

A FIT MAN CAN... MEASURE UP

Take a look at yourself. If your belly is growing faster than your butt, you have bigger problems than figuring out how to hit the beach without taking off your shirt. The more fat your body stores in your midsection, the higher your risk of heart disease. And of course being fit can significantly reduce that belly – and that risk.

The test The easiest method of determining your risk level is a comparison of your waist and hip circumferences. Grab a measuring tape and measure the circumference of your waist at the narrowest point. Then measure the distance around the widest part of your hips and butt. Divide your waist circumference by your hip circumference for your score

THE SCORECARD

0.92 or higher: Your wife and kids are going to miss you
0.82 to 0.91: Ordinary
0.81 or less: Flat and happy

Shrink your belly A combination of diet and exercise will help you lose weight the fastest, says Jeff Volek, co-author of *The Testosterone Advantage Plan*. Try this simple method to make the transition from chip-eater to healthy guy: cut 1 000kJ from your daily diet and burn another 1 000kJ a day through exercise. That's a total of 2 000kJ – enough to lose half a kilo a week. Food-wise, 1 000kJ is about the same as a two cups of Coke or two handfuls of potato chips. To burn the same number of kilojoules through exercise, an 80kg man could lift weights for 30 minutes, walk four kilometres or play basketball for 20 minutes.

BONUS TIP Limit your carbohydrates – especially the high-sugar kind – after 5pm. Research shows that as the day progresses, your body has a greater potential to store them as fat.

A FIT MAN CAN... RUN 270M IN LESS THAN A MINUTE

Whether you're chasing down a purse-snatcher or running across the soccer field to intercept the ball, every once in a while a man just needs to bust it. If you can cover 270 metres in 60 seconds, you have the speed and drive you need for just about anything.

The test Run as fast as you can between two lines spaced 22.5 metres apart. Do six round-trips, for a total of 270 metres.

THE SCORECARD

More than 70 seconds: Slow
60 to 70 seconds: Ordinary
Less than 60 seconds: Fast and agile

Increase your speed Add sprint intervals to your training three times a week, says Mike Gough, a strength and conditioning coach in Ottawa, Ontario.

- Sprint at 85% of your full effort for one minute.
- Then run at a lower intensity – about 40% of your full effort – for the next minute. Continue to alternate between intensities for 20 minutes. Try this workout on a hill to achieve even more.

BONUS TIP Sprint as hard as you can each time you push off the line for your first three steps. Then stride through the middle portion of each 22.5m sprint by simply trying to maintain the momentum you gained from your sprint. This will increase your speed drastically, since the starting and stopping parts of the run are where most guys let up. That's because accelerating or decelerating is more physically demanding than just running.

A FIT MAN CAN... TOUCH HIS TOES

No one has to mistake you for an Olympic gymnast, but flexibility does equal fitness. And having flexible muscles will help keep you moving – in the gym, on the court, at the golf course – as you grow older. Research shows that from age 35 to 50, the average man's flexibility decreases by 25%. That can lead to shoulder injuries and runner's knee. Plus, tight pectoral muscles limit your strength, so your weight workouts will suffer, too – not to mention your ego.

The test One of the best measures of flexibility is the sit-and-reach test. Here's how to do it:

- Place a tape measure on the floor and put a 30-centimetre piece of masking tape across the 38cm mark.
- Sit down with your legs out in front of you and your heels at the edge of the tape, one on each side of the tape measure.
- Put one hand on top of the other and reach forwards on the tape measure as far as you can by bending at your hips. Your score is the number your fingertips touch.

THE SCORECARD

Less than 38 centimetres: Stiff
38 to 43 centimetres: Ordinary
More than 43 centimetres: Fantastic flexibility

Fire up your flexibility Your muscles can be stretched more effectively when they're completely relaxed, says Joel Ninos, a physical therapist. Try this stretching technique, called hold-relax, to increase your flexibility.

- Place your right leg on a bench or a desk that's between knee- and waist-high. Keep your right leg straight and lean forwards as far as comfortably possible by bending at your hips.
- Continue leaning forwards as you bend your right knee slightly and gently push your right heel into the bench for 10 seconds. Then relax and straighten your leg. Now you should be able to lean forwards further than when you started. Hold this new position for 20 to 30 seconds.
- Repeat three more times, leaning forwards a bit more each time.

BONUS TIP Before you begin your stretch, stand and place your heel on top of a stability ball with your leg straight out in front of you. Without moving your body, rotate your foot in circles on the stability ball for about 20 seconds. This will help to relax your leg muscles and you'll be able to stretch further.

A FIT MAN CAN... THROW A BALL 22 METRES (FROM HIS KNEES)

You may never need to become the best netball player, but here's why having this skill is important: throwing for distance is the ultimate measure of your upper-body power (that's strength plus speed). A fit man needs a powerful arm, not only to throw the long bomb and hit his tee shot, but also to punch someone who dares take a swing at him. Still think it's a lame goal?

The test Kneel on a basketball court, just behind the baseline. Throw the ball overhand as far as you can. The top of the key at the far end of the court is a little under 22 metres – just short of the Fit Man standard.

THE SCORECARD

Less than 18 metres: Lousy arm
18 to 22 metres: Ordinary
More than 22 metres: Cannon fire



Make your upper body more powerful The single-arm clean and press will improve both upper-body speed and strength, says Ballantyne.

- Grab a dumbbell with an overhand grip and hold it in your left hand so that it hangs down at arm's length in front of you.
- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your knees slightly bent. Explosively pull the dumbbell straight up by dipping your knees, then straightening up as you shrug your shoulder.
- As you pull upwards, rotate the weight in an arc over your upper arm until the dumbbell rests on the top of your shoulder. Your upper arm should be parallel to the floor, and your knees slightly bent again.
- Dip at your knees and push the weight above your shoulder until your arm is straight. Return to the starting position and repeat with your right arm.

Perform this move two days a week with three days of rest in between. Perform three sets of four repetitions with a heavy weight during one workout, and do eight sets of one repetition with a lighter weight – about 30% of the heaviest weight you can lift once – during the other.

BONUS TIP Throw the ball at a 40- to 45-degree trajectory. It'll go further that way.

A FIT MAN CAN... DO MORE THAN 40 CHIN-UPS

Chin-ups are one of the most efficient ways to build up the muscles in your back and in your arms. As you become better at this test, you can be assured that you are increasing your fitness and athletic ability, says Rooney.

The test Do as many chin-ups as you can in three minutes.

Rules

- 1 Begin in the hanging position, with your feet off the floor.
- 2 For a rep to count, you must raise your chin above the bar and then lower yourself until your arms are straight.
- 3 Set whatever pace you prefer. Rooney's advice: when you're about to fail at a rep, rest 20 to 30 seconds. Then do sets of one or two reps in order to avoid working your muscles to complete failure.

THE SCORECARD

Less than 19 chin-ups: Below average
20 to 29 chin-ups: Average
30 to 39 chin-ups: Good
40 to 49 chin-ups: Excellent
50 or more: Extraordinary

Boost your score Use Rooney's improvement plan (below). Do the routine once a week for four weeks. Then take five days off and try the test again.

WEEK	SETS	CHIN-UPS	REST BETWEEN SETS
1	4	6	2 minutes
2	5	6	90 seconds
3	4	8	1 minute
4	4	10+	1 minute

BONUS TIP If you struggled...

- Raise your chin above the bar, hold for 10 to 20 seconds and lower. Do this three to five times. If you can stay up longer than 20 seconds, add weight: hold a dumbbell with your legs or wear a weighted vest.
- Try negatives: start with your chin above the bar, and then slowly lower yourself. Take five to 10 seconds. Complete three sets of five or six reps.



A FIT MAN CAN... HOIST A WEIGHT IN UNDER FIVE SECONDS

A crucial but often overlooked aspect of weight training is the pace at which you lift. Bill Hartman uses this simple test to spot weaknesses and help men increase the amount of weight they can hoist. Take the test as you perform a squat or bench press.

The test Do a typical warm-up. Estimate a weight you can lift only once, and lift 60% of that for five reps. Then lift 70% (three reps) and 80 % (one rep). Now do your one-rep max, noting the time it takes to lower and raise the weight.

THE SCORECARD

If you take more than five seconds: Slow

If you take less than five seconds: Fast

Work on lifting faster Perform this workout twice a week for four to six weeks to increase your muscle elasticity.

1 Using half of your one-rep max weight from the test, time how long it takes you to lift that weight for five reps. Add one second to that time. That's your target time. For example, if your one-rep max is 90 kilograms, you'd lift 45 kilograms for five reps. And if those five reps take you 7½ seconds total, your target time is 8½ seconds.

2 Add weight to the barbell in two or five kilogram increments, and try to perform five reps with each weight within a time faster than your target time. For example, you'd do five reps of 50 kilograms, then 55 kilograms and so on. Rest 60 to 90 seconds between sets.

3 Perform as many sets of increasing weight as possible. When you can no longer do five reps faster than your target time, you're done for the day.

BONUS TIP Work on increasing the amount you can lift. Focus on lowering reps while adding weight.



B E L L Y O F F ! G U I D E

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GET BACK IN SHAPE

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PHASE
3

Train Like An Athlete

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The New Secrets of Flat Abs

CURRENT RESEARCH BLAZES NEW PATHS TO A FLAT BELLY
AND A HEALTHIER BODY

BY DAVID ZINCZENKO WITH TED SPIKER

Y

ou strain and sweat in cardio class, but that belly flab stays put. Maybe you stepped on the scale today and found that you're heavier than you were two days ago, despite a week of eating every conceivable variation of celery.

What gives? My guess is that you've been going about weight loss the wrong way. But it's not your fault. You've been conditioned to fight your body's natural fat burners through diets of denial that leave you coveting your colleague's leftover pizza. Workout-of-the-stars du jour leaves you feeling sore and frustrated.

I have an option for you that's not so painful: take your cues from people who study weight loss, nutrition and fitness. We've compiled breakthroughs in nutrition and exercise science that will open your eyes and motivate you to rethink your strategies on diet and fitness today.



WHAT YOU EAT NOW AFFECTS WHAT YOU'LL EAT LATER

- ➔ Scientists at the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center at Tufts University found that eating foods that elevate your blood sugar triggers intense cravings for carbohydrates later on. In other words, one biscuit begets more biscuits and so on. Eating carbohydrates – baked goods, pasta or sugary foods – promotes greater kilojoule consumption, not just now, but during the rest of the day, say the researchers.
- ➔ In 2008, the *British Journal of Nutrition* reported that consuming high-quality protein early in the day results in a feeling of fullness that is more sustained than eating a similar meal in the evening would provide.
- ➔ A similar study at Purdue University found that men on kilojoule-restricted diets had their hunger satisfied the longest when they were given extra protein at breakfast.

CERTAIN FOODS MAY BOOST METABOLISM AND TARGET BELLY FAT

Protein is a dieter's best friend – and you should try to include it with every meal and snack. It fills you up, it digests more slowly than fast-absorbing carbohydrates do, it spurs lean muscle growth and it even elevates fat burn.

- ➔ Recently, British researchers compared the effect of eating a protein-rich snack after a workout with that of a high-carbohydrate snack. Study participants who consumed 43 grams of protein in a low-carb snack burned 21% more fat than those who chugged a sugary post-workout drink. Not only do you expend more energy processing protein than you do processing carbs, but the amino acids in protein may lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol in your blood, which could boost your metabolic rate, say scientists at Syracuse University.
- ➔ A study in the *International Journal of Obesity* determined that eating two eggs in the morning promotes weight loss. In the experiment, two groups of overweight participants ate a 1 421 kilojoule breakfast of either two eggs or a single bagel five days a week for eight weeks. Those who ate these inexpen-

sive protein-packed wonders, the study found, lost 65% more weight than the bagel-eaters did and showed no negative changes in their cholesterol or triglyceride levels.

- ➔ Wholegrains work, too. A 2009 study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* showed that a kilojoule-controlled diet rich in wholegrains trimmed extra fat from the waistlines of obese people. Study participants who ate all wholegrains (in addition to five servings of fruits and vegetables, three servings of low-fat dairy, and two servings of lean meat, fish, or poultry) lost more weight from their abdominal area than another group on the same diet but with all refined grains.

DIET AND EXERCISE WORK BETTER THAN EXERCISE ALONE

- ➔ A combination order of wholegrains and regular exercise adds up to greater belly-fat loss. In a study conducted at Pennsylvania State University, 50 obese people were split into two groups. One group's members were instructed to eat wholegrains as their only grain choices; the other group was told to avoid wholegrains. Both groups were encouraged to do moderate exercise. After 12 weeks, the exercisers who ate wholegrains lost a higher percentage of belly fat than those who ate refined grains.
- ➔ A 2008 study at the Human Performance Laboratory at the University of Connecticut suggests a similar strategy for triggering the body to burn more fat. Two groups of men were instructed to do resistance training while following either a low-carbohydrate or low-fat diet. After 12 weeks, the lifters who reduced their carbohydrate intake lost an average of eight kilograms of body fat – twice as much as the lifters who followed the low-fat plan. What's more, each member of the low-carb group gained about one kilo of lean muscle. "Restricting carbohydrates forces your body to burn fat instead of sugar," says study author and assistant professor Dr Jeff Volek.
- ➔ Eating a breakfast of slow-burning carbohydrates, such as oats, can significantly improve kilojoule burn during exercise, according to a study at the University of Nottingham, published in 2009 in the *Journal of Nutrition*. Are you seeing the point?

FOOD IS POWERFUL MEDICINE

- ➔ Italian researchers found that eating as little as one cup of raw vegetables a day can add two years to your life. What does “raw” have to do with it? Cooking is said to deplete up to 30% of the disease-fighting antioxidants in vegetables. Here’s a quick way to get your quota: fill a ziplock bag with chopped broccoli, red and green peppers, and carrots, and toss it into your work bag with a packet of dressing for an easy snack. The fat in the dressing will boost your body’s absorption of certain nutrients.
- ➔ Green tea may help exercisers burn more belly fat, according to a 2009 study from the American Society of Nutrition. The 12-week study showed that people who drank green tea and did 180 minutes of moderately intense exercise each week lost twice as much weight as people who exercised but didn’t drink the catechin-rich beverage. The green-tea group also showed larger declines in total abdominal fat, subcutaneous abdominal fat and triglycerides.
- ➔ When researchers at Loma Linda University tracked the eating habits of 34 000 Seventh-Day Adventists – a population famous for its longevity – they found that those who ate nuts five days a week tended to outlive the non-nut eaters, by three years. Scientists believe the monounsaturated fats and fibre in the nuts provide a longevity benefit and help keep weight in check.

EXERCISE IS THE BEST MEDICINE

- ➔ The blubber around your organs, called visceral fat, can cause disease. A study in *Obesity* shows that exercise is crucial for keeping visceral fat off: people who lost belly weight and exercised 80 minutes a week didn’t regain visceral fat after a year. People who stopped working out but maintained a healthy weight had 25% more of the dangerous fat.
- ➔ A 2009 Arizona State University study review examining the effects of exercise on depression found that people who exercised had significantly lower depression scores than clinically depressed people who did not exercise.
- ➔ Strength training four days a week for 13 weeks decreased lower back pain in chronic sufferers by nearly 30%, a recent report said.

HOW YOU WORK OUT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HOW LONG

A growing body of recent research supports the idea that high-intensity workouts protect you from harmful belly fat.

- ➔ One recent study at the University of Arkansas demonstrated that exercisers who did shorter, high-intensity workouts had a 20% reduction in dangerous visceral (deep abdominal) fat after three months, while people who did longer workouts at a moderate pace showed no change. Researchers say alternating short bursts of fast walking with slower segments can burn an average of 25% more kilojoules.
- ➔ A Penn State University study found that people who lifted weights while following a programme of diet and aerobic exercise had the same weight loss as those who only dieted (or who dieted and performed aerobic exercise). But the lifters lost 2.2 kilograms more fat because almost none of their loss came from muscle.
- ➔ A 2009 study from the University of Oklahoma found that people who did resistance training three times a week for 14 weeks experienced significant improvements in weight loss and waist circumference, as well as decreases in fasting insulin levels.

WHY IT’S IMPORTANT TO LOSE THAT BELLY

Now that you’ve had a glimpse of the new research that’s going to help you find your abs, let’s learn why abs are so important to a healthy body. We’ll begin with a quick biology review.

The average South African is carrying around about 30 billion fat cells. Each of those buggers is filled with greasy substances called lipids. When you pump doughnuts, chips and chocolate bars into your system, those fat cells can expand – up to 1 000 times their original size. But a fat cell can grow only so big; once it reaches its physical limit, it starts to behave like a long-running sitcom. It creates spin-offs, leaving you with two or more fat cells for the price of one. And once you have a fat cell, you’re stuck with it. So as you grow fatter and double the number of fat cells in your body, you also double the difficulty you’ll have losing the lipids inside them.

Many of us tend to store fat in our belly, and that’s where the health dangers of excess weight begin. Abdomi-



nal fat doesn't just sit there and do nothing; it's active. For instance, it releases free fatty acids that impair your ability to break down the hormone insulin – and too much insulin in your system can lead to diabetes. Fat also secretes substances that increase your risk of heart attack and stroke, as well as the stress hormone cortisol (high levels of cortisol are also associated with diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure). Abdominal fat resides within striking distance of your heart, liver and other organs – pressing on them, feeding them poisons and messing with their daily function.

When you're in great shape, you're telling the world that you're a disciplined, motivated, confident and healthy person – and hence a desirable partner. Here are my top six reasons why flattening your belly is going to make your life better.

REASON 1

A FLAT BELLY WILL HELP YOU LIVE LONGER

Many studies show that the people with the largest waist sizes have the most risk of life-threatening disease. The evidence couldn't be more convincing. According to the National Institutes of Health, a waistline larger than 101 centimetres for men signals significant risk of heart disease and diabetes.

Waist size is an accurate measure of health risk because it gives a good indication of the amount of fat a person is carrying around, especially in the abdominal area. As mentioned earlier, belly fat, which sits against the organs and secretes harmful substances, is considered an important risk factor for cardiovascular conditions such as stroke and coronary heart disease, and it leads to a reduction in the body's response to insulin, a precursor to the onset of type 2 diabetes. In fact, research indicates that half of all peo-

ple whose waists measure more than 100 centimetres are insulin resistant.

By developing a strong abdominal section, you'll reduce body fat and significantly cut the risk factors associated with many diseases, not just heart disease. For example, the World Health Organisation estimates that up to one-third of cancers of the colon, kidney and digestive tract are caused by being overweight and inactive. And having an excess of belly fat is especially dangerous. See, cancer is caused by mutations that occur in cells as they divide. Fat tissue in your abdomen spurs your body to produce hormones that prompt your cells to divide. More cell division means more opportunities for cell mutations, which means more cancer risk.

A lean waistline also heads off another one of the nation's most pressing health problems – diabetes, which is now listed as one of the top 20 underlying causes of death in South Africa by the Medical Research Council. Fat – especially belly fat – bears the blame. The kilojoules you can't burn are what convert into fat cells that pad your gut and leave you with a disease that, if untreated, can lead to blindness, heart attack, stroke, amputation and death.

Upper-body obesity also can lead to obstructive sleep apnoea and other respiratory problems, such as wheezing, chronic coughing and shortness of breath. All this can create an ugly cycle: abdominal fat leads to poor sleep. Poor sleep means you drag through your day. Sluggish and tired, your body craves some quick energy, so you snack on some high-kilojoule junk food. That extra junk food leads to more abdominal fat, which leads to... well, you get it.

REASON 2

A FLAT BELLY WILL IMPROVE YOUR SEX LIFE

You know the old phrase, "It's not the size of the ship; it's the motion of the ocean"? Take that to heart. Changing your diet and exercise habits can't improve on what God gave you, but it can help rebuild your body to maximise the rocking and rolling that goes on belowdecks. Consider the benefits that can help you pull that ship into harbour.

More stamina. The thrusting power you generate during sex comes not from your legs, but from your core. Strong abdominal and lower-back muscles give you the stamina and strength to try new positions (or stay steady in old ones) to make sex as pleasurable as it should be. And a smaller waistline means you will be better

equipped in another important area – bloodflow.

Better erections. Every guy will face it, at least once. Although ED has many possible causes, one of the major ones is purely a matter of traffic control. Artery-clogging cheeseburgers don't discriminate, so when you're overweight, the gunk that gums up the blood vessels leading to your heart and brain also gums up the vessels that lead to your genitals. Plaque forms on the inside of your arteries, narrowing the passageways that blood must follow. The blood vessels in your pelvic area can become so clogged that a sufficient supply of blood can't get through to form an erection.

More length. The length of the average man's penis is about 7.6 centimetres flaccid, but the fat at the base of a man's abdomen can cover up the base of his penis. Losing seven kilograms of fat will add up to 1.27 centimetres to the length of a man's member. No, it's not growing, but decreasing the fat that surrounds it will allow all you've got to actually show.

REASON 3

A FLAT BELLY WILL KEEP YOU SAFE FROM HARM

Fires in the 1880s were dangerous because most urban housing was still built with wood. Today, such a disaster is unthinkable. The infrastructures of today's cities are built with steel. Think of your midsection as your body's infrastructure. You want a core made of solid steel, one that will give you a layer of protection that belly fat never could.

Consider a US Army study that linked power in abdominal muscles to injury prevention. After giving 120 artillery soldiers the standard army fitness test of sit-ups, push-ups and a 3.2-kilometre run, researchers tracked their rates of lower-body injuries (such as lower back pain and Achilles tendinitis) during a year of field training. The 29 soldiers who cranked out the most sit-ups (73 in two minutes) were five times less likely to sustain lower-body injuries than the 31 who barely notched 50. But that's not the most striking result. The soldiers who performed well doing the push-ups and the 3.2-kilometre run enjoyed no such protection – suggesting that upper-body strength and cardiovascular endurance had little effect on keeping their bodies sound. It was abdominal strength that provided the protection. A strong core affects the functioning of your entire body.

REASON 4

A FLAT BELLY WILL STRENGTHEN YOUR BACK

I had a friend who used to throw out his back maybe two or three times a year. He always did it in the simplest ways – sleeping a little awkwardly, maybe, or getting out of a chair too quickly. His problem wasn't a bad back; it was weak abs.

Because most back pain is related to weak muscles in your torso, maintaining a strong midsection can help resolve many spinal issues. The muscles that crisscross your midsection don't function in isolation; they weave through your torso like a spiderweb, even attaching to your spine. When your abdominal muscles are weak, the muscles in your butt (your glutes) and along the backs of your legs (your hamstrings) have to compensate for the work your abs should be doing. The effect, besides straining the muscles picking up the slack, is that it destabilises the spine and leads to back pain and strain – or even more serious back problems.

REASON 5

A FLAT BELLY WILL HELP YOU WIN

If you run, bike, play naked Twister or participate in any sport that requires movement, your most essential muscle group isn't your legs or arms. It's your core – the muscles in your torso and hips. Developing core strength gives you power to perform. You're fortifying the muscles around your whole midsection so they can provide the right amount of support when you need it. So if you're weak off the serve, strong abs will improve it. If you play a sport that involves a lot of running – whether it's tennis or soccer – ab strength can improve

your game tremendously. That's because speed is really about accelerating and decelerating. How fast can you run from a stopped position at one baseline to stopping at the other baseline? Your legs don't control that; your abs do. When researchers studied which muscles were the first to engage in these types of sports movements, they found that the abs fired first. The stronger they are, the faster you'll reach the ball.

REASON 6

A FLAT BELLY WILL LIMIT YOUR ACHES AND PAINS

As you age, it's common to experience some joint pain – most likely in your knees and hips, but maybe around your feet and ankles, too. Surprisingly, the source of that pain might not be weak joints; it might be weak abs – especially if you do any kind of exercise, from serious tennis playing to walking every morning. When you're participating in any type of athletic activity, your abdominal muscles help stabilise your body during start-and-stop movements, such as changing direction on the tennis court or practising kickboxing moves. If you have weak abdominal muscles, your joints absorb all the force from those movements. Your body is sort of like a trampoline, with your abs as the centre of the mat and your joints as the supports that hold the mat to the frame. If your abs are strong enough to absorb some shock, your body will function well. If they're not, the force puts far more pressure on your joints than they were built to withstand.

Similar benefits can extend to people who aren't athletes. One Dutch study found that those with larger waists were more likely to have heel pain and develop carpal tunnel syndrome, a painful hand and wrist condition. And as if to underscore those results, another study found that 70% of people who suffered from carpal tunnel syndrome were either overweight or obese.

REVEAL YOUR HIDDEN SIX-PACK NOW!

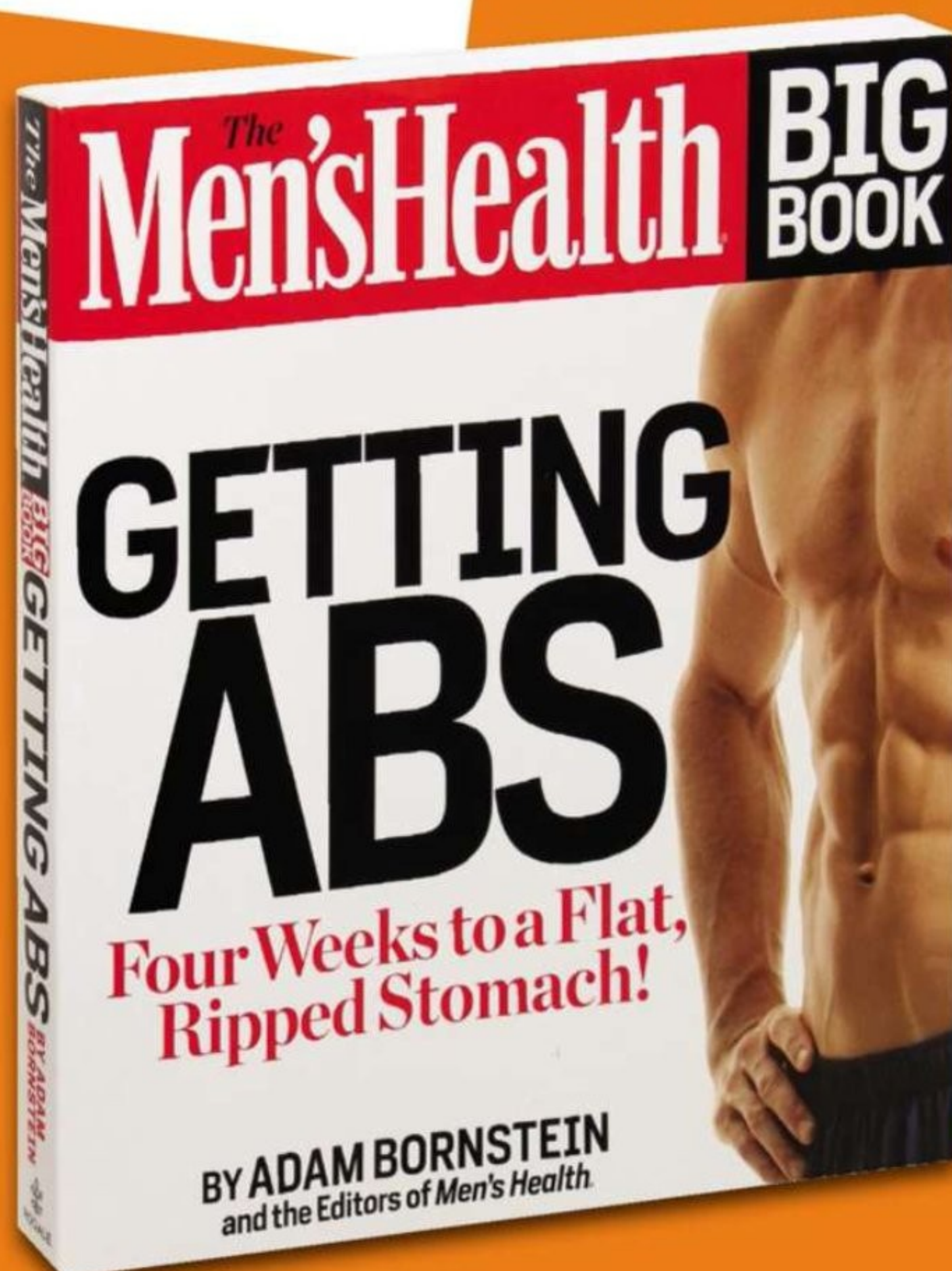


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The All-star Diet

FEED YOUR BODY FOR STRENGTH, SIZE,
ENDURANCE AND MAXIMUM PERFORMANCE

BY LOU SCHULER



ports nutrition is easy – if you're a cartoon character. Take Popeye: the sailorman would down a can of spinach and immediately he was shot-putting a bowling ball into the stratosphere. Try that at home and the only thing you'll be heaving is the spinach. "No specific food will make you faster or stronger tomorrow," says Dr Lonnie Lowery, an exercise and nutrition scientist at Winona State University in Minnesota. "Sports nutrition is all about many factors adding up over time." So even though there's nothing that will make you an instant athlete, the right foods and drinks can help you work harder, train longer and look better. We've rounded up the latest research to help you fuel the body you have – and create the body you want. All you need is enough strength to twist a lid, tear a pouch, and, yes, open a can.

INCREASE YOUR ENDURANCE

THE RIGHT CARBS (AND OCCASIONALLY, EVEN A DOSE OF SALT) CAN HELP YOU GO FARTHER, LONGER

In some ways, your body is one big bundle of fuel wrapped in skin; a man of average size stores enough fat to sustain him for days, weeks, maybe months. So why is it so hard to exercise for much longer than a couple of hours at a time? One word: glycogen. It's glucose in storage form, and your body's most easily accessible source of energy. You can work, sleep or wander the mall all day without ever making a dent in the glycogen stored in your muscles and liver. But the minute you ramp it up, your energy supply is on the clock.

"Most adults have enough glycogen to exercise one to three hours at most. If you're exercising at moderate to high intensity, your glycogen levels will sink more rapidly," says Marie Spano, a sports nutritionist in Atlanta who works with varsity and pro athletes. Your body will never let you use all your glycogen – there's always some in reserve – but you'll start slowing down when the needle nears the E. To train seriously, you need to delay that moment as long as possible.

LOAD UP TO GO LONG

Research shows that eating the right amount of carbs several hours before a race or a multi-hour training session can maximise your glycogen supply, which boosts your endurance. To top off your tank, your pre-workout meal should include 0.5 to 1 gram of carbohydrates per half kilo of body weight, Spano says. For an 80kg guy, that's between 1 463 and 2 926kJ from carbs (or two to four cups of cooked spaghetti). Which end of the range is right for you? Depends on how much time you have to digest. The longer the lag before game time, the more you can eat.

EAT RIGHT FOR SHORT WORKOUTS

If you're exercising for an hour or less, you don't need to make special dietary accommodations. But you do need fuel to sustain yourself. Lowery recommends eating a meal with at least 840kJ, 20 grams of protein and 30 grams of carbs an hour or two before your workout. A simple grilled-chicken sandwich will set you up.

DRINK FOR ENDURANCE

Exercise-induced dehydration slows your motor neurons; it's as if you were making Chad le Clos swim through jelly. Not only do you feel fatigue sooner than you otherwise would, but your performance slips as well. Skipping liquids also means missing out on an easy-to-absorb delivery system for the nutrients your body needs during or after your workout. Knowing how much fluid you need to replace isn't easy. Sweat rates range from almost half a litre an hour to four times that – and, of course, rates fluctuate with the weather. But whatever you do, don't rely on thirst as a gauge. By the time you're hankering for a drink, you're probably well on your way to dehydration. There's one way to know for sure if you're downing enough liquid: weigh yourself before and after a long race or training session. Almost all the weight you lose is water. Replace each half a kilo with three cups of fluid. Another indicator of hydration status is your urine. If your bladder goes longer than three hours without a cry for help, you're probably not drinking enough, Spano says. Colour matters, too; urine shouldn't be darker than a pale lager.

GO FOR THE FAST BURN

If you have to be on the starting line first thing in the morning and your window for digesting food is less than an hour, go for easily digestible carbs with high water content, such as bread (which surprisingly contains 35% water) and lower fibre fruits, like melons and bananas. Stay away from foods that are high in protein and fat (nuts, for example), which take longer to digest than quick carbs do. Also, avoid high-fibre fruits and vegetables (beans, broccoli, raisins, berries), which can cause gastrointestinal distress if you eat them just prior to strenuous exercise.

CAFFEINATE A WORKOUT

Caffeine does more than keep you awake. If you're a long-haul athlete, it can also boost your performance, help you use more fat for energy (thus sparing your pre-

REFUEL ON THE FLY

ALONG WITH PROVIDING water and carbohydrates, sport drinks replace some of the minerals you lose through heavy sweating. Three of those minerals – potassium, magnesium and chloride – are called electrolytes for a simple reason: your body needs them to transmit electrical signals from your brain to your muscles. Those signals travel through your body's fluids, which are regulated by another electrolyte, sodium. If you'll be running or riding continuously for longer than an hour, start replenishing your carbohydrate and electrolyte stores around the 30-minute mark, and every 15 minutes after that, Spano says. You want 30 to 60 grams of carbs for every hour of exertion. So if you tank up with 120ml of a sports drink (which usually has about 7 grams of carbs) at ¼ hour intervals, you'll reach the low end of that range; 230ml every 15 minutes and you'll be at the high end.

cious glycogen) and reduce post-training pain. Curiously, though, you can't reap these benefits from the world's most popular caffeine-delivery system. "There seems to be a compound in coffee that limits caffeine's benefits," says Dr Jay Hoffman, a professor of sports and fitness at the University of Central Florida. That's why caffeine studies that demonstrate its benefits have involved people drinking powdered caffeine dissolved in water instead of consuming coffee. Energy drinks are another source of caffeine. But they also pack a ton of kilojoules and you'd need a Ph.D. in chemistry to decipher their ingredient lists. Consider taking a caffeine tablet instead so you know what you're consuming. Studies show benefits with 1.4 to 2.7 milligrams of caffeine per half kilo of body weight, which works out to about 252 mg for an 80kg guy. If you aren't a heavy coffee or soft drink drinker, you'll likely get wired with less.

ADD SALT FOR STAMINA

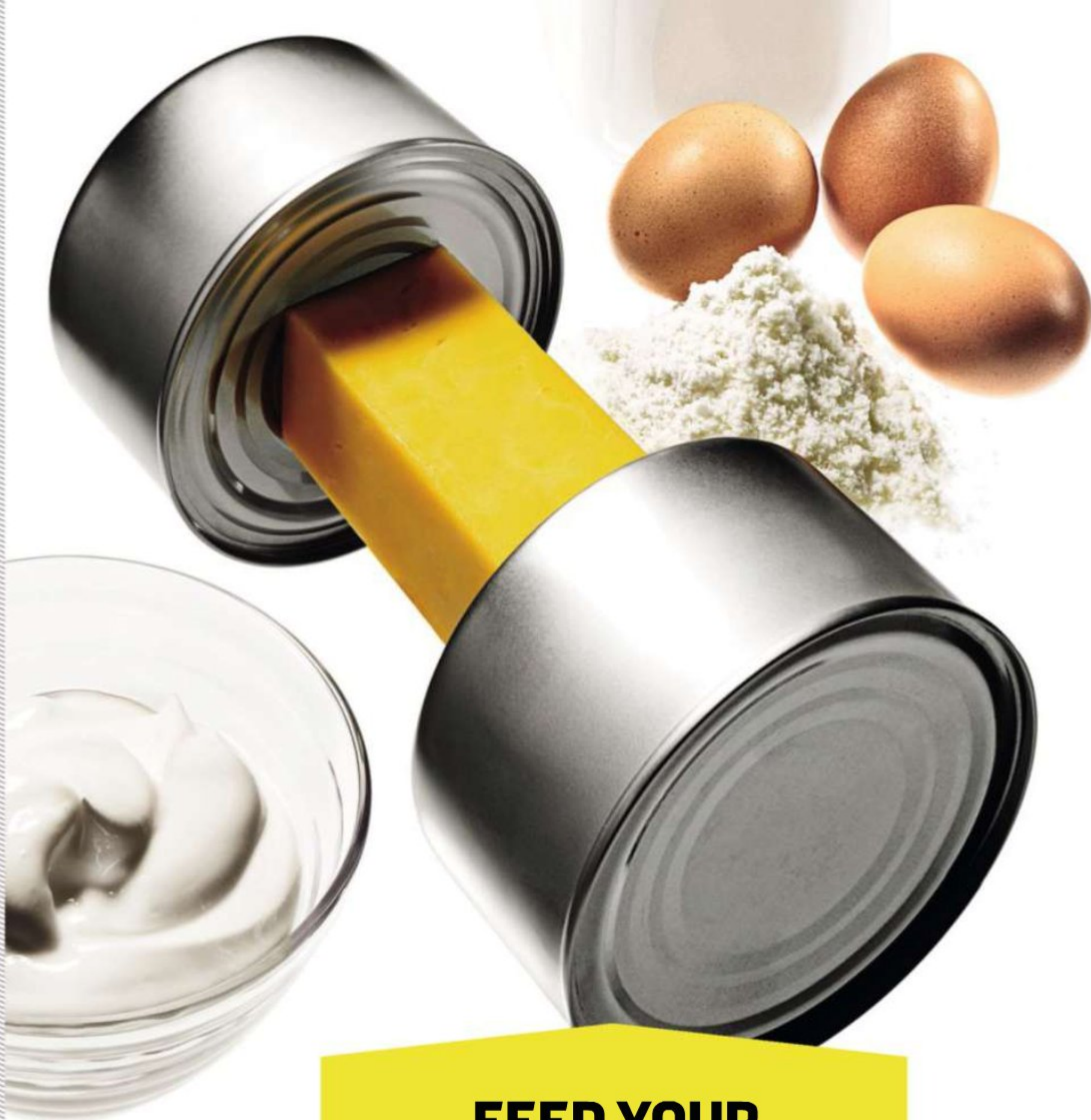
There's plenty of hype about the evils of salt, but avoiding it is bad advice for any man who does high-volume, high-intensity training, especially in heat and humidity. If you regularly sweat out 2 to 3% of your body's weight – one to three kilograms for most of us – you probably need more sodium.

JUICE UP YOUR BODY

To protect your muscles during training, think dark-red fruit. A study at Oregon Health & Science University showed that runners who drank tart cherry juice for a week before an ultra-endurance challenge had less pain after the race. Red grapes, tart cherries and pomegranates are all available in juice form, and are loaded with anthocyanins, a type of antioxidant that reduces the muscle inflammation and damage caused by serious exercise.

STAY HUNGRY

FOR HALF A KILO OF MUSCLE, your body needs about 11 700kJ. If you want to build it in a week, that means you'll need about 1 670 extra kilojoules a day, says Dr Lonnie Lowery. "In our studies, the only times we've seen big gains in muscle are with the men who were the biggest eaters," Phillips says. If you find it difficult to swallow those additional kilojoules, the problem could be your go-to protein. While whey is terrific in a post-workout drink, it's also the most satiating type of protein, blunting appetite more than tuna, eggs or turkey, according to a study in the *British Journal of Nutrition*.



FEED YOUR MUSCLES

I Imagine living in a house that's constantly under construction. That's what it's like inside your body, where three shifts of molecular labourers tear down and build up muscle tissue all day, every day. After strength training, your body's construction crew wants to work overtime, but it needs the right building materials. "Consume protein as soon as possible after strength exercise," says Dr Stuart Phillips, a professor of kinesiology at McMaster University in Ontario. If you eat nothing, your muscle growth will be seriously hampered – you could even lose muscle, in fact. Be strategic with foods and supplements instead and you'll reap big results from your workout.

WHEY TO GROW

When it comes to muscle growth, one protein source stands out. “Whey protein offers the biggest benefit,” Phillips says. You digest it more quickly than other types of protein, so it hits your muscles faster. Whey protein also has the highest concentration of the amino acid leucine, giving it more muscle-building power than anything in the supermarket. Phillips recommends 25 grams of whey protein post-workout. There’s no harm in having more, but there’s no proven benefit either.

COMBINE PROTEIN WITH CARBS

Together, they achieve more than either does on its own. Carbs may help protein reach your muscles faster, speeding growth. Meanwhile, some research suggests protein accelerates the build-up of glycogen. Even if you’re on a low-carb diet, you should take in some carbs with your post-workout protein. Use a protein supplement that contains carbs or add your own with whole fruit. Mix some in a blender with water and ice for the perfect post-workout treat. You can also use skim milk instead of a protein supplement – three cups provides 25 grams of protein, 35 grams of carbs and a generous dose of muscle-building leucine.

HIT THE RIGHT RATIO

For men who run, lift or play sports a few hours a week, no post-workout combination of carbs and protein has been shown to work better than any other. But if you’re a serious athlete who trains hard for over an hour every day, your best results will come with a ratio of carbs to protein that’s at least two to one, some research has shown.

POP THE MUSCLE VITAMIN

Back in the day, fitness buffs were really into the benefits of sunlight: Charles Atlas, for example, included daily sun baths in his famous Dynamic Tension programme. Today, science is starting to figure out what old-school bodybuilders understood intuitively: vitamin D, created by your body through direct sun exposure without sunscreen protection, has an important role in muscle health and function.

Nobody can say for certain whether vitamin D boosts performance in healthy, fit men; the strongest research involves only the very young and the very old. But giving your body more D (through supplements and/or sun exposure) can’t hurt, and it could very well help you grow stron-

ger and avoid injury. Researchers at the University of Wyoming say most people would benefit from taking a supplement with 1 000 to 2 000 international units (IU) of vitamin D each day.

DON'T LIFT DEHYDRATED

Weight training doesn’t cause dehydration; after all, lifters tend to work out in air-conditioned gyms. But if you’re dehydrated before a lifting session, you could do more harm than good. A 2008 study in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* found that dehydrated lifters produced more stress hormones, including cortisol, while reducing the release of testosterone, the body’s best muscle builder. If you lift first thing in the morning, have a glass of water first. This is especially important if you’re dehydrated from the night before.

BOOST YOUR RESULTS

If you’re looking to increase your strength and workout capacity by as much as 10% and add muscle size over time, you can’t go wrong with the one supplement shown to do both in numerous studies: creatine monohydrate. For the fastest results, the International Society of Sports Nutrition recommends loading up with 0.14 grams per half kilo of body weight a day (about 25 grams for an 80kg man) for at least three days, and then maintaining with three to five grams a day. If you’re not in a hurry, taking two to three grams a day for a month will achieve the same result. Skip the nitric oxide supplements, though. “They’re a waste of money,” Phillips says. “I’m stunned that they’ve stuck around as long as they have.”

FIGHT OFF YOUR FATIGUE

Beta-alanine is another supplement with solid science behind it. It’s an amino acid your body uses to form a compound called carnosine. “Carnosine is found in skeletal muscle, and helps you delay fatigue,” Hoffman says. Early research suggests it could help improve strength and endurance.

There’s no firm dosage recommendation yet, but University of Oklahoma researchers suggest taking 6.4 grams a day, spread over four doses. To see results, however, you need to be patient. It takes two to four weeks to build up enough carnosine in your muscles to have an effect. But the good news: levels stay elevated for weeks after you stop supplementing.

MIX AND MATCH

Combining creatine with beta-alanine can also be a smart move. One of Hoffman's College of New Jersey studies found that varsity football players who took both supplements (10.5 grams a day of creatine, 3.2 grams a day of beta-alanine) had more-productive workouts and less fatigue and even built more muscle than those who took only creatine.

EAT FOR MORE ENERGY

If you're following a daily training regimen, don't eat like a guy who's trying to drop kilos. A study in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* showed that athletes who trained to exhaustion after two days of low-carb eating slowed down the process of building muscle. "The lower you drive carbohydrates down, the more you need other fuel for energy," Phillips says. "Drop carbs below 40% of total kilojoules at that activity level and you're going to sacrifice performance."

BURN FAT

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Some men don't work out to lose body fat. They eat and train with the goal of becoming stronger or faster or better at their sport – and a great physique is just part of the deal. In fact, athletes can screw up their chance for glory by focusing too much on appearance – that is, cutting the kilojoules they need to fuel their workouts. But for most of us, better performance is just a nice perk. What we really want is to drop fat without losing muscle.

Maintain muscle when you're losing kilos – don't skimp on the meat and fish.



CALCULATE YOUR CARBS

The key to shedding flab is to adjust your carb intake to your activity level. Weight loss advisor Alan Aragon, has a simple way to calculate how many carbs you need. Multiply your target body weight by two if you have a desk job, work out in a gym several times a week for an hour or less and your main goal is fat loss. Multiply by four if you're a recreational athlete who trains for more than an hour a day. Multiply by six if you're a competitive athlete who trains multiple hours a day or if you're a guy with a Mini Cooper body and a v8 metabolism who is struggling to gain weight. The number you end up with indicates how many grams of carbs you should eat every day. If you're in category one and weigh 80kg, that's the equivalent of about two Mexican wraps.

EAT TO LOSE WEIGHT

Don't forget the protein. About 25% of the protein kilojoules in your food are burned off in digestion, absorption and chemical changes in your body, so protein has less of a kilojoule impact. And perhaps best of all, it defends your hard-earned muscle tissue when you're trying to lose fat. A recent study in *Sports & Exercise* found that a weight loss diet with 35% of its kilojoules from protein preserved muscle mass in athletes, while a diet with just 15% protein led to an average loss of 1.6kg of muscle in just two weeks. Aim for a daily intake of about two grams of protein per kilo of target body weight when you're working to lose fat.

BLEND THE BEST SHAKE

You can boost the appetite-suppressing effect of a whey shake by whipping it to a froth. When Penn State researchers had men drink blended shakes of various volumes, they found that the men who drank the more-aerated shakes ate 12% less food at their next meal. The scientists speculate that the larger appearance of the shakes made men think they were drinking more.

FIGHT FAT WITH FAT

A lean body is a well-oiled machine. A 2007 study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* showed that people who swallowed 1.9 grams of omega-3s daily and did cardio a little more than two hours a week reduced

their body fat, lowered their triglycerides and raised their HDL cholesterol.

Here's the kicker: when another group with the same exercise regimen was given sunflower oil (which has mostly omega-6 fats) instead, they lost hardly any fat. Omega-3s are powerful body sculptors in their own right. Fixing the omega imbalance is a two-step process. First, says Aragon, take three to six fish-oil capsules a day, for a total of one to two grams of DHA and EPA. Second, cut back on omega-6s. Many salad dressings and mayonnaises are packed with soyabean oil, the source of more omega-6 fats than any other food. Choose dressings made with extra-virgin olive oil (rich in heart-healthy monounsaturated fats) and use mustard instead of mayo.

SCRAMBLE TO SLIM DOWN

Not only are eggs a great muscle-building food, but they can also help you look less egg-shaped. A 2010 study in *Nutrition Research* showed that men who had eggs for breakfast ate less over the next 24 hours than those who began their day with carbs instead.



The Better Sex Workout

BUILD STRENGTH AND STAMINA FOR PEAK PERFORMANCE

BY JEFF CSATARI

M

en's Health once declared the bed to be the greatest piece of exercise equipment ever invented. You have to give us props for our enthusiasm, but really there are a lot more efficient ways to burn kilojoules and build muscle.

Walking, for instance.

What we should have said is that sex is the greatest motivation for exercising known to man. Now, that's the truth. Isn't the promise of sex why you go to the gym in the first place and lift heavy objects while listening to "Eye of the Tiger"? Maybe you started lifting weights to make the high school rugby team. Maybe you joined the gym when your doctor told you to lose weight. All valid reasons to exercise.

But honestly, most guys work out for one thing – to attract women.

Sex is the ultimate carrot before the stubborn donkey. What pries you out of your favourite chair



and into the gym when the game's on and there's a six-pack chilling in the fridge?

The potential for sex.

What would encourage you to put down that pizza slice and pick up an apple and a dumbbell instead? The knowledge that women prefer to run their fingers over hard abs rather than a flabby belly.

Sex is one of your most powerful natural urges. So what more brilliant way to motivate yourself to lose weight, get in shape and build muscle, stamina and good health? Make some important lifestyle changes and you'll improve, not only how you look in a tight T-shirt, but your performance in bed.

BUILD HERE FOR SEX

Having sex uses a lot of tiny muscles you don't normally use during the course of the day unless you happen to be a gigolo or a crocodile wrestler.

"You'll definitely have more enjoyable sex if you don't have to worry about getting fatigued or pulling something," says trainer Jeff Bell. Bell is a weight loss and fitness expert with a special interest in exercise for sexual health benefits. So we asked Bell to put together a workout that's not only a terrific kilojoule-burning and fitness-boosting routine, but one that preps the body for better performance in bed. It incorporates general fitness, sex-specific training and moves that can give you more stamina for longer love-making sessions. Bell devel-

oped this programme with men in mind, but women can use it, too.

THE LOGIC BEHIND THE WORKOUT

UPPER-BODY STRENGTH. Building the muscles of the shoulders, triceps, chest and back will make it easier to support your body weight for longer periods of time when you are on top or supporting her body weight during other moves like standing sex positions.

FLEXIBILITY. A cramp in your piriformis at the most inopportune time can do more to cramp your style than her mother walking in on you while you are doing the downward dog to her daughter. But by stretching and lengthening your muscles regularly, you'll be more likely to move into more challenging positions.

CORE POWER. The abdominals and lower back muscles are used for the thrusting motions of sex. You won't be attempting any of those moves if you are laid up with lower back pain. Finnish researchers say that people with weak core muscles are more than three times more likely to suffer from lower back pain. Plus, strong abs also girdle your belly so it won't flop over and get in the way of business. She wants to wrap her legs around your six-pack, not a keg.

AEROBIC STAMINA. Big, strong muscles may make her swoon, but if you are huffing and puffing, you won't have the stamina to maintain your rhythm. Shaping up with

endurance workouts like interval training sessions and resistance-training circuits can prevent weaker muscles from quitting too soon.



Adapted from *The Men's Health Big Book of Sex*. (Visit shop.mh.co.za to buy)

A TOTAL-BODY PROGRAMME

This is a four-week programme of circuits that become progressively more challenging as you build strength, endurance and flexibility. There are six different circuits. Do them according to the plan below, which schedules workouts three days a week – for example, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays – to allow for one day of rest in between for recovery. During off days, do some aerobic exercise such as running, walking, biking, swimming or playing sports. Select one non-circuit day a week to devote

to a high-intensity interval-training workout. Begin each workout with a brief warm-up to loosen your muscles and send oxygen-rich blood circulating throughout your body. Do the warm-ups for five to 10 minutes.

Progress from the easier moves to the more challenging ones. We mix up the warm-up exercises for each new circuit to keep workouts fresh and to challenge different muscle groups in various sequences for greater growth and fat burn.

THE 4-WEEK PLAN

WEEK 1

MONDAY

Workout 1

WEDNESDAY

Workout 2

FRIDAY

Workout 3

WEEK 2

MONDAY

Workout 5 (2 sets)

WEDNESDAY

Workout 1 (2 sets)

FRIDAY

Workout 3 (3 sets)

WEEK 3

MONDAY

Workout 4 (2 sets)

WEDNESDAY

Workout 2 (3 sets)

FRIDAY

Workout 3 (3 sets)

WEEK 4

MONDAY

Workout 5 (3 sets)

WEDNESDAY

Workout 4 (3 sets)

FRIDAY

Workout 6 (2 or 3 sets)

The Circuit Programme

HOW TO DO A CIRCUIT

Circuits are fast, efficient workouts that combine the heart rate-elevating benefit of aerobics and the muscle building of resistance training. In a circuit, you do one set of each exercise resting only briefly – 10 to 30 seconds, if at all – between exercises before moving to the next. Only after completing the list of exercises do you go back and repeat the exercises. Rest for one to three minutes between circuits.

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	REST
WORKOUT 1: WARM-UP			
Jumping jacks	1	20	0
Low side-to-side lunge	1	10–20 each side	0
Hinge	1	8–10	0
Lower-back lie-down	1	10	0
WORKOUT 1: CIRCUIT			
Stability-ball decline push-up	2	10–15	30 seconds
Hip raise	2	10	30 seconds
Sandbag lunge	2	20 alternating legs	30 seconds
Kegels	2	10 (15 seconds each)	1–3 minutes

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	REST
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WORKOUT 2: WARM-UP

Squat	1	10–30	0
Jog in place	1	30 seconds	0
Inchworm	1	6	0
Standing hip thrust	1	30 seconds each leg	0

WORKOUT 2: CIRCUIT

Renegade row	2	8–12	30 seconds
Kettlebell squat catch	2	8–12	30 seconds
Lower-back lie-down	2	10	30 seconds
Kegels	2	10 (15 seconds each)	1–3 minutes

WORKOUT 3: WARM-UP

Jumping jacks	1	20	0
Squat	1	10–30	0
Hinge	1	8–10	0
Kneeling leg crossover	1	10 with each leg	0

WORKOUT 3: CIRCUIT

Abdominal Tootsie Roll	2	3–4 each direction	30 seconds
Spider-man push-up	2	6–12	30 seconds
Gluteal bridge	2	10–16	30 seconds
Kegels	2	15	1–3 minutes

WORKOUT 4: WARM-UP

Low side-to-side lunge	1	10–20 with each leg	0
Jumping jacks	1	20	0
Squat thrusts (also called burpees)	1	10	0
Standing hip thrust	1	30 seconds each leg	0

WORKOUT 4: CIRCUIT

Stability-ball decline push-up	3	12–16	30 seconds
Hip raise	3	12–20	30 seconds
Sandbag lunge	3	30 sec. alternating legs	30 seconds
Sock slide	3	6–12	30 seconds
Kegels	3	10 (15 seconds each)	1–3 minutes

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	REST
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WORKOUT 5: WARM-UP

Cross back lunge	1	20	0
Jumping jacks	1	20	0
Squat	1	20	0
Inchworm	1	6	0

WORKOUT 5: CIRCUIT

Renegade row	3	8-12	30 seconds
Kettlebell squat catch	3	8-12	30 seconds
Lower-back lie-down	3	10	30 seconds
Hinge	3	8-12	30 seconds
Kegels	3	15	1-3 minutes

WORKOUT 6: WARM-UP

Jog in place	1	1 minute	0
Low side-to-side lunge	1	20	0
Standing hip thrust	1	30 seconds each leg	0
Squat	1	20	0
Kneeling leg crossover	1	16 each leg	0

WORKOUT 6: CIRCUIT

Spider-man push-up	3	10-12	30 seconds
Hinge (holding a 15kg sandbag)	3	6-10	30 seconds
Inchworm	3	5-10	30 seconds
Sandbag stand-up	3	8-10 each leg	30 seconds
Single-leg hip raise	3	8-10 each leg	30 seconds
Renegade row	3	12-16	30 seconds
Kegels	3	10 15-second holds	1-3 minutes

Warm-up Exercises

This quick warm-up routine will bring blood to your muscles, loosen your joints in preparation for a workout and stretch and strengthen the stabilising muscles of the lower body, pelvis and core – used when you get busy. You might be tempted to jump right into the main workout. Don't. Take it slow. Think of this as

foreplay for your workout. On second thought, don't. That would be creepy. Just do the warm-up. It will prepare your muscles so they can work harder and get more from the main workout. And it'll help you avoid injuries that can set you back and keep you out of the sack.

HINGE

Stretches and strengthens core, quadriceps and hip flexors.

A Kneel on the floor with your hands at your sides. Resist the urge to sit back and rest your weight on your heels. Your back should be straight and your knees bent at a 90-degree angle.

B Keeping your head and spine in line with your thighs, slowly lean back a few centimetres. Hold for 3 seconds, then return to the starting position. Do 8 to 10.



INCHWORM

Loosens thighs, hips, obliques, back and shoulders.

A Stand with your legs straight, feet hip-width apart.

B Bend at the waist and place your hands on the floor.

C Keeping your legs straight, walk your hands forwards while keeping your abs and lower back braced. Then take tiny steps to walk your feet back to your hands. That's 1 repetition. Do 6.



JUMPING JACKS

Raises heart rate, warms muscles to avoid injury.

A Stand with your feet together and your hands at your sides.

B Simultaneously raise your arms above your head and jump enough to spread your feet out wide. Quickly reverse the movement and repeat. Do 20.



LOWER-BACK LIE-DOWN

Stretches the lower-back muscles.

A Lie flat on your back with your legs bent, feet flat on the floor and arms at your sides.

B Grab your legs just behind the knees. Pull both knees towards your chest, keeping your back flat on the floor at all times. Hold for 2 to 3 seconds and then lower your legs. Repeat for 10 reps.



Keep your tailbone and the back of your head on the floor. You'll prevent your back from rounding, which would lessen the effect of the stretch.

LOW SIDE-TO-SIDE LUNGE

Improves strength and flexibility of lower body, especially hips, glutes and groin.

A Stand with your feet about twice shoulder-width apart. Shift your weight to your right leg as you push your hips backwards and lower your body. Reverse the move and raise yourself back standing.

B Next, repeat to the left side. Alternate back and forth. Do 10 to 20 reps on each side.



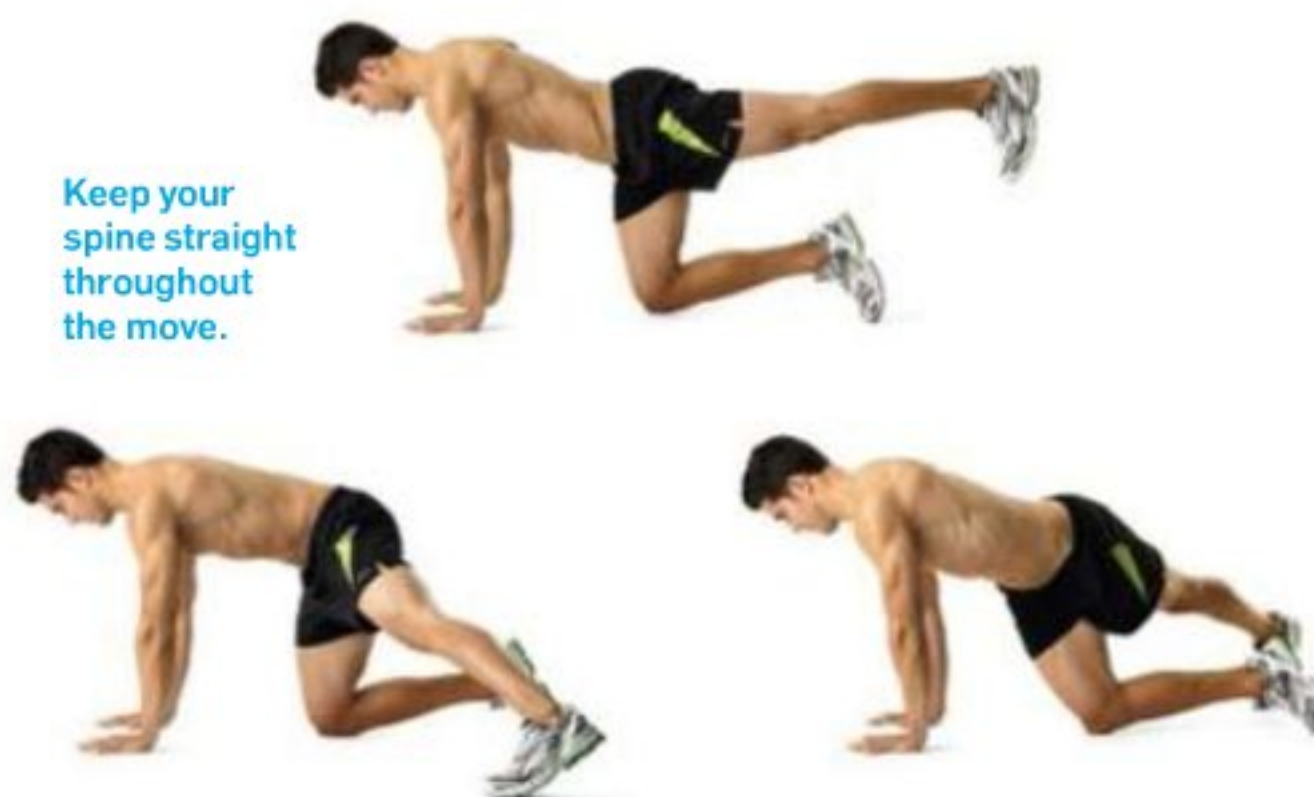
KNEELING LEG CROSSOVER

Stretches the adductors and abductors.

A Kneel and place your hands on the floor. Straighten your left leg behind you.

B Now angle your leg to the left, with your toes touching the floor.

C Raise your left leg up and over your right leg, then lower it until your left foot touches the floor just outside your right foot. Return to starting position and repeat 10 times. Then switch sides.



SQUAT

Stretches the hamstrings, calves and quads and warms the entire body.

A Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Grasp your hands behind your head.

B Sit back, bending your knees, until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor (or lower). Stand straight up, pressing through your heels. Do 10 to 30 at a brisk pace.



STANDING HIP THRUST

Stretches hip flexors.

A Stand with your feet together, hands on your hips or clasped in front of your chest. Step forwards with one foot so that your feet are a couple of feet apart. Keep your toes facing forwards and your knees slightly bent.

B Gently push your pelvis forwards until you feel a very mild stretch in your hips. Hold for 30 seconds then reverse leg positions and repeat.



JOG IN PLACE

You know how to do this, but do you know perfect form? You'll burn more kilojoules and warm up faster by doing it right.

A Drive your knees high to get a better stretch and pump. As you drive each knee up, swing your opposite hand upwards to get as much vertical lift as possible. If you wish, you can turn this into a high knee skip by adding a hop on the downward step.



As you run in place, keep your upper body straight. Keeping your head up and looking forwards will help your form.

SQUAT THRUST

Stretches the whole body; also known as burpees.

A Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your arms at your sides.

B Push your hips back, bend your knees and lower into a squat.

C Kick your legs backwards so that you're now in a push-up position. Then quickly bring your legs back to the squat position. Stand up quickly and repeat the entire movement.



FEED YOUR LOVE MUSCLES

To lose body fat and increase muscle tone

FIGURE on eating 100 kilojoules per kilogram of body weight every day. So, for a 80-kilogram man that would be 8 000 kilojoules spread over five or six meals. Keep fat to no more than 20% of total kilojoules.

EAT 30 grams of fibre per day. Get a good start by eating at least three pieces of fruit and having protein-rich beans with one main meal.

SHOOT for 2.2 grams of protein and 4.4 grams of carbohydrates per kilo of body

weight per day. Canadian scientists recently determined that 130 grams is the bare minimum amount of protein you should eat if you regularly do resistance training.

The Better Sex Workout Circuit

If you want to lose weight, shape up, sculpt an incredible beach body and fine-tune every muscle required for optimum sexual activity, this selection of exercises is definitely for you. Each has been specifically selected by trainer Jeff Bell, because they do one or more of the following: boost endurance, make muscles and ligaments more flexible, strengthen the lower back and abs and build upper body power – all the things you need to be a better sexual athlete.

The beauty of this workout is its simplicity and effectiveness. You don't have to go to a gym. Many of the exercises are body-weight drills that you can do in the privacy of your home, so it's extremely convenient. However, some key equipment will help you get the most from this workout: a stability ball, a pair of dumbbells, a kettlebell, a medicine ball and a sandbag.

"This is a terrific workout for the busy man who wants to be in top shape for maximum sexual enjoyment," says

Bell. "By doing these exercises as a circuit, you can build strength and endurance without spending hours working out. It crams a lot of good work in a short, but challenging workout."

Follow the programme schedule and circuit instructions, always beginning your workout with the warm-up corresponding to the circuit number. Do this workout for four weeks and you'll feel fitter and better prepared to go longer in bed. Later, you can incorporate these exercises into other resistance-training workouts to maintain the sex-specific strength gains you've made.

STABILITY-BALL DECLINE PUSH-UP

Works shoulders, chest, triceps and abs.

A Kneel with a stability ball behind you and place your hands flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart. Place your shins or toes on the ball and get into the standard push-up position.

B Tuck your chin and, leading with your chest, lower your body to the floor. Push yourself back up. Do 10 to 15 reps.



Keep your head in line with your back and resist looking at the ball. Bending your neck can strain it and you might lose your balance.

HIP RAISE

Strengthens gluteals, hamstrings and pelvic muscles.

A Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Place your arms at your sides, palms facing down.

B Slowly raise your butt off the floor until your body forms a straight line from your knees to your shoulders. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds, then lower yourself to the floor. Repeat the move 10 times.



Press with your heels, not toes, when you begin to press up.

Squeeze your glutes as you lift your hips.

SANDBAG LUNGE

Targets the quadriceps, glutes and calves, but also works the arms and back for holding your partner.

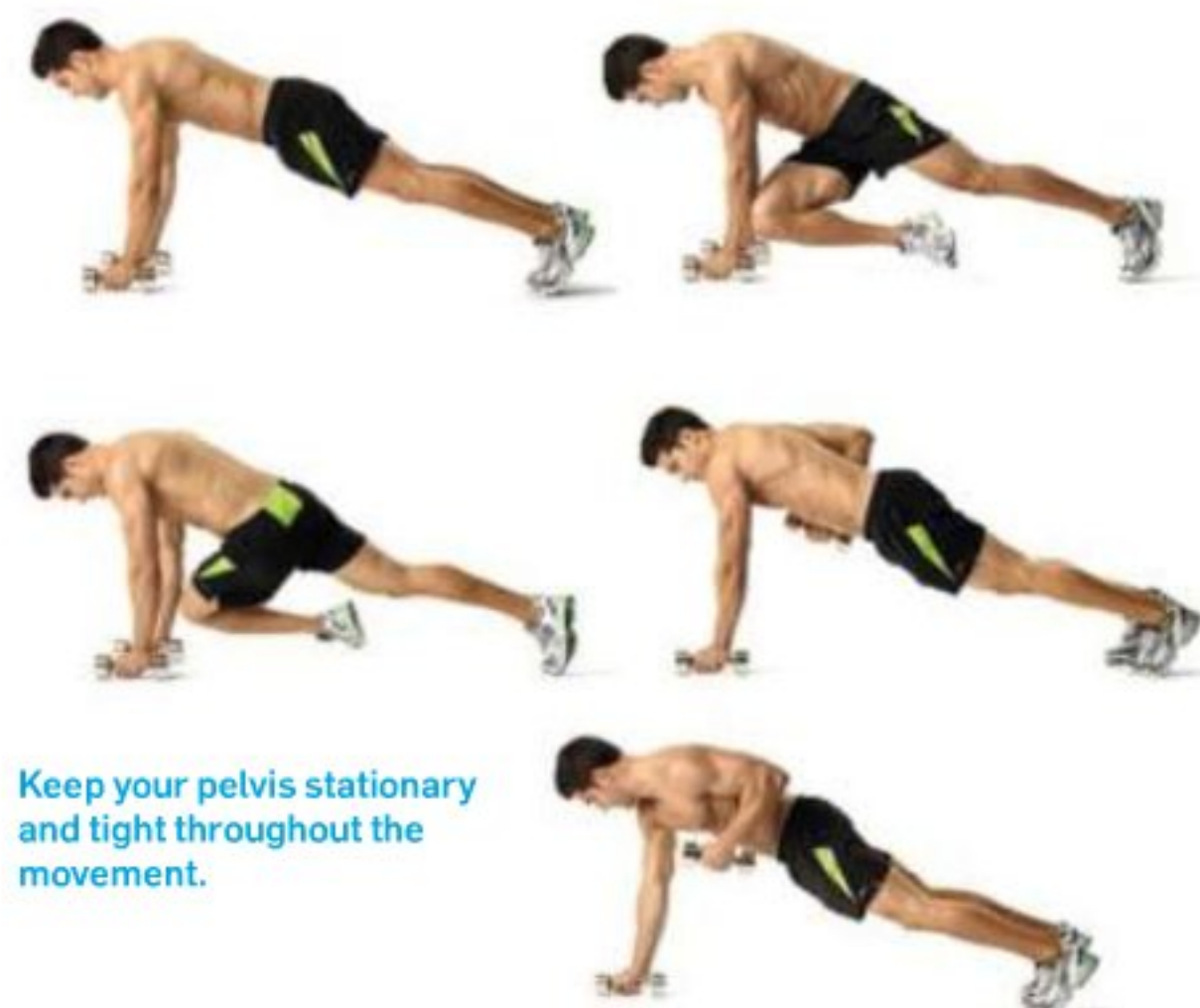
- A** Hold a 15- to 30-kilogram sandbag in your arms with an underhand grip. Stand tall with your feet hip-width apart. Brace your core and stick your chest out.
- B** Step forwards with your right leg and lower your body until your front knee is bent 90 degrees. Pause, then push back to the starting position. Switch sides and repeat. Alternate for 20 total reps.



RENEGADE ROW

Works the middle and upper back as well as the chest; ideal for endurance and core strength in the man-on-top position.

- A** Get into a push-up position with your hands gripping a pair of dumbbells, arms straight and shoulders directly above your hands. Your back should be straight from head to heels. Tighten your core muscles.
- B** Now, keeping your arms straight, bend your right knee and draw it across your torso toward your left elbow. Pause, then straighten that leg, returning your right foot to the floor.
- C** Repeat the move, this time bringing your left knee to your right elbow. Return to the starting position.
- D** Now, balancing on your left hand, row the right dumbbell to your shoulder, pause, then lower it to the floor.
- E** Do the same with the left dumbbell while balancing on your right. That five-part move is one complete repetition. Do 8 to 12.



THE HIIT WORKOUT

Fit one high-intensity interval-training (HIIT) workout into your weekly fitness plan. Studies show that short bouts of high intensity physical effort interspersed with short bouts of recovery effort burn more fat kilojoules than long aerobic sessions do.

Warm-up by running or biking for 3 minutes at an easy pace.

Run or bike for 30 seconds at 90% of your best effort.

Slow down to a little less than half speed for 1 minute to 90 seconds to recover.

Repeat this sprint/recovery sequence six times.

Cool down for 3 minutes.

KETTLEBALL SQUAT CATCH

For cardiovascular endurance, leg power and groin flexibility.

A Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and hold a kettlebell by the handle with both hands. Get into a squat position.

B Stand up while pulling the kettlebell up to shoulder height. Let go of the kettlebell and scoop your hands underneath.

C Sit back into a squat position, holding the kettlebell at the top of your chest.

D Stand explosively and push the kettlebell overhead. Squat again while lowering the kettlebell and holding it in the original hang position. Entire sequence is 1 rep. Do 8 to 12.



ABDOMINAL TOOTSIE ROLL

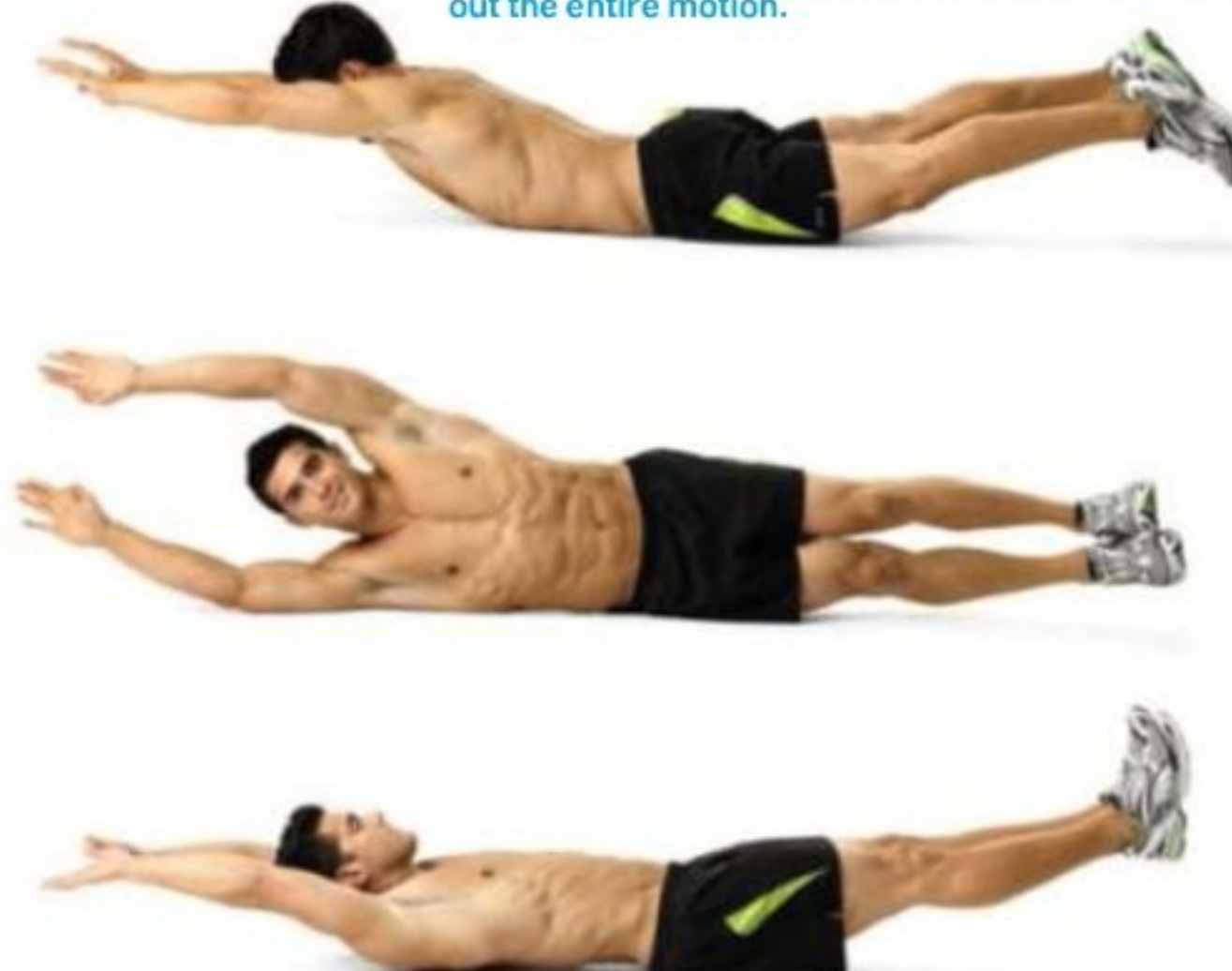
For a strong, toned waist and core stability.

A Lie on your stomach on the floor with your arms extended out above your head. Lift your chest, arms and legs off the floor.

B Slowly roll from your stomach to your right side while never losing abdominal control.

C Roll onto your back. Then, slowly reverse the roll first to your side, then your stomach. Relax your arms and legs to the floor. That's 1 rep. Next, reverse the roll to the left side. Do 3 to 4 reps in each direction.

The key is not to jerk or use momentum. Stay controlled throughout the entire motion.



SPIDER-MAN PUSH-UP

Builds core and shoulder/chest endurance and strength.

A Assume a standard push-up position.

B As you lower your body towards the floor, lift your left foot off the floor, swing your left leg out sideways and try to touch your knee to your elbow. Reverse the movement, then push your body back to the starting position. Repeat, but on your next repetition, touch your right knee to your right elbow.



Alternate left and right legs for a total of 6 to 12 repetitions.

SOCK SLIDE

Strengthens shoulders, chest, triceps, lower back and abs.

A For this move, you need to be wearing socks on a slippery floor surface. Assume the push-up position, with your hands flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart, arms and legs straight and feet about 3 centimetres apart. Keeping your hands in place, slowly slide your body back until your nose is pointing down at the space between your hands.

B Slowly slide your feet forwards by bending your knees. That's 1 repetition. Continue moving backwards and forwards for 6 to 12 repetitions.



Keep your arms straight, your abs in and your back flat.



SANDBAG STAND-UP

Strengthens quadriceps and calves for kneeling, standing and squatting sex positions. Also builds arms and back.

A Kneel on the floor and hold a 15- to 30-kilogram sandbag close to your chest.

B Lift your right leg and place the right foot on the floor.

C Then push through your heel to stand and bring your left foot next to your right.

D Now bend both knees and move your right knee to the floor, then the left knee until you are kneeling again. Switch sides and repeat. Do 6 stand-ups with each leg.



SINGLE-LEG HIP RAISE

A Lie face up on the floor with your left knee bent and your right leg straight. Raise your right leg until it's in line with your left thigh. Keep your back pressed into the floor.

B Push your hips upwards, keeping your right leg elevated. Pause, then slowly lower your body, and leg back to the starting position. Complete 6 to 8 repetitions with your right leg elevated. Next, repeat the exercise, this time elevating your left leg and working your right glute and hamstring.



Hard Core

DO YOU HAVE THE BALLS FOR THIS ABS WORKOUT?

You don't need equipment to build impressive abs and a bulletproof core that'll never fail you in bed. But if you're serious about challenging your abs, we recommend you get a pair of balls:

A STABILITY BALL

Also known as a Swiss ball, also known as a big air-filled ball. When you exercise on it, the lack of stability forces smaller muscles to work hard to keep your body steady. Doubles as a sex toy!

A MEDICINE BALL

Buy a 4- or 5-kilogram one and use it for explosive, rotational exercises that will build a strong, athletic core. Not to be used as a sex toy. Build a 100-rep abs workout around these abs exercises. Choose five exercises and do 20 reps each (except for the plank, which you'll hold for 30 seconds).

STABILITY-BALL FINGER TAPS

A Lie on the floor, holding a stability ball between your lower legs. Your lower back should remain on the floor and your legs should be slightly bent.

B Extend your arms straight up as you simultaneously raise your legs and upper body into a contracted position. Keep your upper body in the up position for all of your repetitions as your legs move up and down. At the top of the movement, tap the ball to your fingers.



MEDICINE-BALL SIT-UP

A Grab a medicine ball with both hands and lie on your back on the floor. Bend your knees 90 degrees, place your feet flat on the floor and hold the medicine ball against your chest.

B Now perform a classic sit-up by raising your torso into a sitting position. Lower it back to the start. That's 1 repetition.



STABILITY BALL PLANK

A Place your forearms on a stability ball and your feet on the floor. Your body should form a straight line from your shoulders to your ankles. Brace your core by contracting your abs as if you were about to be punched in the gut. Hold this plank for 10 to 30 seconds. If you can't hold for 30 seconds at one time repeat as many times as needed to total 30 seconds.



MEDICINE-BALL STANDING RUSSIAN TWIST

A Hold a medicine ball with both hands in front of your chest and your arms straight.

B Without dropping your arms, pivot on your left foot and rotate the ball and your torso as far as you can to the right.

C Then reverse direction: pivot on your right foot and rotate all the way to the left. That's 1 repetition.

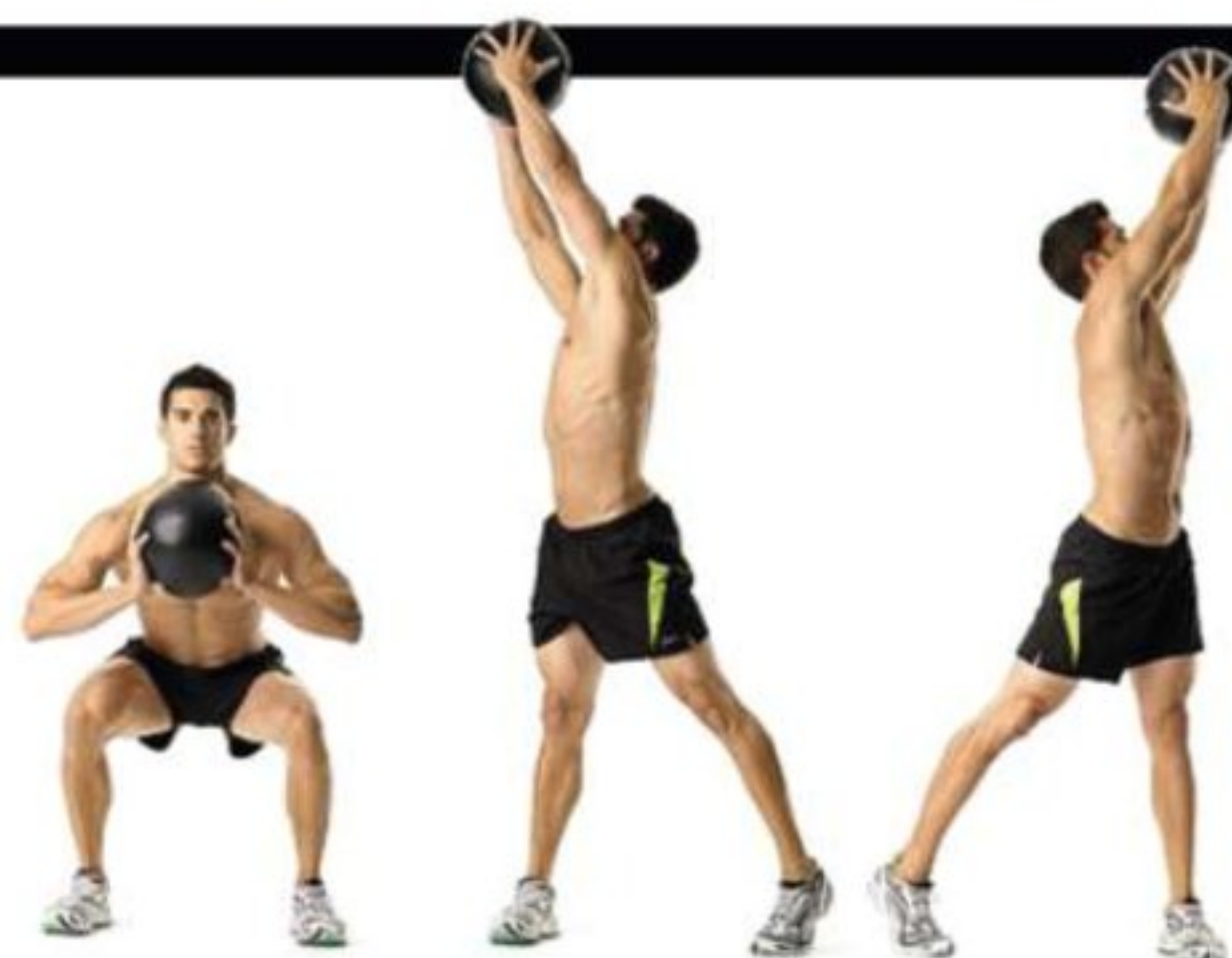


MEDICINE-BALL SQUAT TO PRESS

A Hold a medicine ball close to your chest with both hands, your feet just beyond shoulder-width apart. Push your hips back, bend your knees and lower your body until the tops of your thighs are parallel to the floor.

B Push your body back to start. Simultaneously twist your hips and torso to the right as you pivot on your left foot and press the ball overhead.

C Reverse the motion: pivot on your right foot as you twist to the left and press the ball overhead. That's 1 rep.



MEDICINE-BALL SUITCASE CRUNCH

A Lie on your back with your legs straight. Use both hands to hold a medicine ball above your head and barely off the floor.

B Simultaneously raise your torso and bend your right knee towards your chest as you bring the ball over your knee and towards your foot. Reverse the movement and repeat, this time bending your left knee. That's 1 repetition.



STABILITY BALL JACKKNIFE

A Assume a push-up position with your arms straight. Rest your shins on a stability ball. Your body should form a straight line from your head to your ankles.

B Without changing your lower back posture, roll the ball towards your chest by pulling it forwards with your feet. Pause, and then return the ball to the starting position by lowering your hips and rolling it backwards.



MEDICINE-BALL ROCKY SOLO

A Sit on the floor with your legs slightly bent and hold a medicine ball with both hands just above your lap.

B Twist your torso to the left and place the ball behind you.

C Then twist all the way to your right and pick the ball up and bring it back to the starting position. That's 1 repetition. Do 10 repetitions. Immediately do another 10 repetitions, but this time start by twisting with the ball to your right.



STABILITY BALL MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

A Place your hands on a stability ball as if you were doing a push-up.

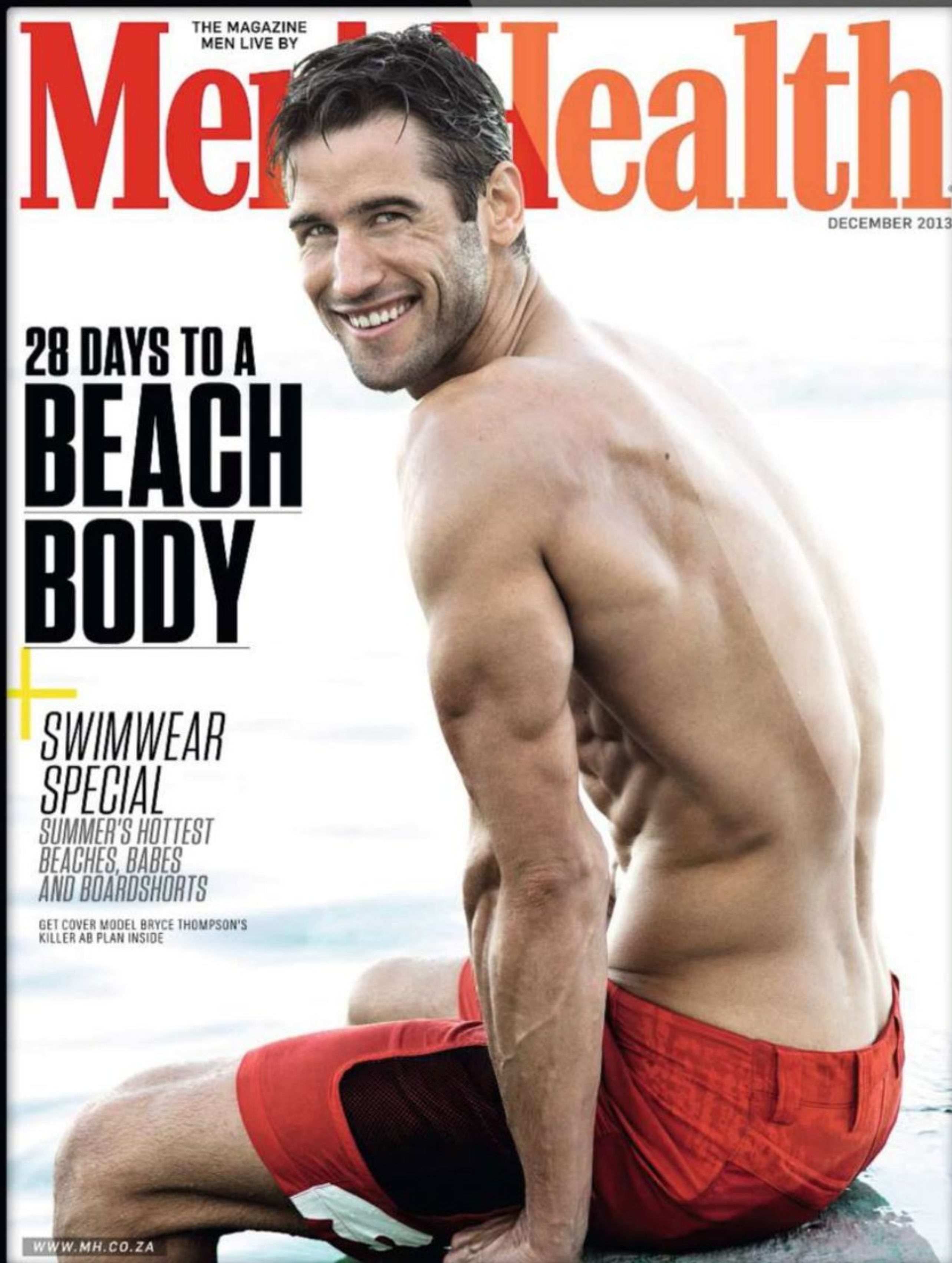
B Your arms should be straight. Your body should form a straight line from your head to your ankles. Brace your core. Now lift your left foot off the floor and raise your knee to as close to your chest as you can. Touch the floor with your left foot. Repeat with your right leg. Alternate raising each knee back and forth for 20 repetitions.



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